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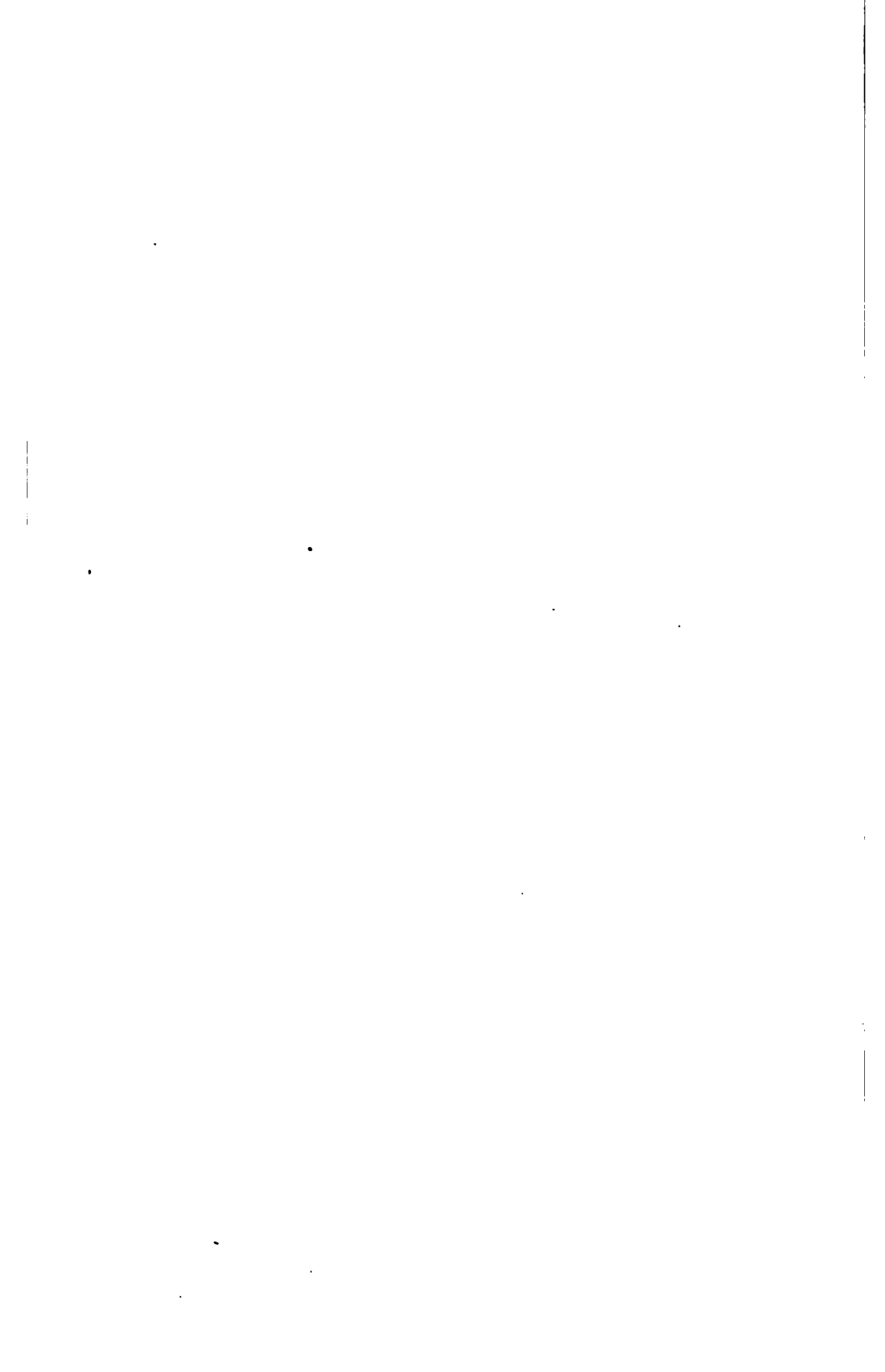
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**RECOLLECTIONS OF
GUY DE MAUPASSANT**





Nadar, Paris

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

Tasman, François
**RECŒLLECTIONS OF
GUY DE MAUPASSANT**

BY HIS VALET FRANÇOIS ❧ ❧
TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH
BY MINA ROUND ❧ ❧ ❧ ❧

LONDON JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD
NEW YORK JOHN LANE COMPANY MCMXII

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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

THE Publisher hopes that the illustrations to this book will be considered not only charming additions to an important work, but of especial interest in that they were all, with the exception of the portrait, taken by the celebrated novelist himself. They are now lent by courtesy of M. Pichot, a member of the little party of tourists in Algeria. Never previously had Guy de Maupassant studied photography, but his strangely adaptable, enthusiastic nature soon mastered the technical details. The Publisher has spared no pains to embellish a book designed as a not unworthy tribute to the memory of a truly great man.

**RECOLLECTIONS OF
GUY DE MAUPASSANT**



RECOLLECTIONS OF GUY DE MAUPASSANT

CHAPTER I

NOVEMBER 1883—MAY 1884

My service begins on November 1st, 1883—Ten days at Étretat—We return to Paris—Too many dinners—The foundation of a club—Work and rowing—A fire—In March we return to Paris—A move—We are established in the rue Montchanin—The month of May—From Paris to Rouen on a yawl—A first-rate boatman.

IT was on November 1st, 1883, that Monsieur R—, who was M. Guy de Maupassant's tailor, introduced me to him as valet and cook.

We entered the drawing-room; there I found two gentlemen, who were standing, warming themselves, with their backs to the fire. The first, a well-built fellow, with a florid complexion, heavy fair moustache, and very curly brown hair (his open night-shirt showed his column-like throat), wore tight-fitting trousers, and Turkish slippers.

I said to myself:—

"That's the master."

The other one, still a young man, was slender, and

completely bald, with a black beard ; he was well dressed, in plain clothes.

The master mentioned his terms, none of which pleased me. I expressed my regrets as well as I could, and withdrew into the ante-room, to await the tailor. Monsieur R—— appeared a quarter of an hour later with his parcel under his arm, and told me to return to the drawing-room, which I did. My future master then asked me *my* terms, and *my* ways of thinking. I told him in a couple of minutes. The slender man, turning towards his friend, then gave signs of great approval.

“ When can you come to me ? ” asked Monsieur de Maupassant.

“ Whenever you please, sir.”

“ Then come to-morrow morning at eight.”

And I was taking a paper (my character) out of my pocket ; he refused to see it, saying :—

“ That’s of no use ; I shall very soon see if you suit me.”

He smiled and nodded to his companion, who was his cousin, M. Le Poitevin.

I then joined my friend the tailor, and apologized to him for having refused to wear livery. He wished me good luck and shook hands.

The next day, at noon, I had cooked the lunch and waited at table.

“ Will you come and spend a few days at my country house ? ” asked my master.

“ Certainly, sir,” I answered.

“ Then, the day after to-morrow, we’ll take the

eight o'clock train in the morning. The cook, who was all last season with me, is still there ; she will tell you what my tastes are."

At eleven in the morning, on the 4th of November, we reached the station nearest his house ; there was still a drive of about nine miles.

A two-horse brougham awaited us. I glanced at the two poor beasts, which really excited one's pity.

"In this country," said my master, "every horse is broken-kneed, on account of the atrocious hills !"

I thought the fact might also be attributable to the coachmen's want of skill.

We bowled along merrily on the road, which was a very good one. My master had stretched his feet out against the front of the brougham, and I was soon obliged to do the same ; for the bench, covered with moleskin, was so slippery and so rickety, that it was impossible to keep on to it when we went down hill. My master swore at the livery stable keeper, who, notwithstanding his constant reproaches, had invariably sent him this ramshackle old vehicle for the last fifteen years.

After passing several hamlets and farms, surrounded by the famous *carrés normands* or gardens, we arrived at the top of the hill, whence one could see in the hollow Étretat, with its tiled roofs mingling with the tints of the sea. On the left a huge valley slopes down. The sky was very clear, the sun rather pallid, resembling almost a waning moon, one of those African moons which throw such sad beams on the ocean of sand after a storm.

My master touched my arm.

"See there, quite at the bottom of the valley, that is 'La Guillette,' my own house, which I am so fond of."

Then he rose.

"How beautiful it is!" cried he, facing the sea.

"What a splendid tint! Dark violet! It is indeed lovely! Only, if a painter gave us that colour, those tones, every one would say: 'How false!'"

I, too, thought it splendid.

We stopped at the Post-Office, then we reached the house, where the cook and the gardener were awaiting us.

The next day, about ten in the morning, my master told me to bring a plate and pick strawberries with him. While picking the fruit, he told me how fertile his garden was, but said how difficult everything became when the summers were dry, as watering had to go on twice a day. I saw how quickly he gathered the strawberries; it was a species of exercise in which he was well practised.

The cook informed me M. de Maupassant was perhaps somewhat fanciful; but according to her, he was the kindest of masters, an excellent fellow, and born in that very countryside, so that everyone called him by his Christian name. Also, "Nobody else could swim like him."

He, his brother, and his cousin, Le Poitevin, could swim round the South-Western Needle out at sea, which, there and back again, meant swimming four miles.

He never meets anyone without a cordial greeting;

he knows everybody's name. Besides which, he is a very clever man, and has already published several books : his publisher came to see him this year, and, depend upon it, if he came so far it was probably to be sure he would have the disposal of what my master writes.

The house stands isolated in the great valley, and there is not much of a view. In the garden there is a hut made of a boat supported by brick pillars, and surrounded by a privet hedge ; this was the bath-room ; and it was also my room. To me it seemed very strange. I had never supposed one could turn an old boat into a dwelling-house, and yet it was not uncomfortable.

In the *carré normand* a pretty little pond was inhabited by goldfish ; in the fields all around us were cabbages ; beyond the fields were grey and melancholy cliffs, on the top of one of these rose a house and a wooden hut ; " that is the hamlet of New-Caledonia," Désirée, the cook, told me.

On the second day, towards seven in the evening, I took a lantern and accompanied my master to the garden-gate ; soon a carriage drove up, and a lady, muffled up to the eyes, got out. My master took her hand and we returned to the house, I walking backwards and trying to make my lantern as useful as possible.

In the ante-room my master helped the lady to take off a whole series of shawls. He was extremely kind and attentive. I observed how perfectly charming his way of speaking was, when he chose.

When dessert had been put on the table I went into the kitchen, where Désirée was awaiting me, so as we might dine.

"She is handsome, that lady, is not she?" exclaimed Désirée.

"Certainly, she is handsome," replied I, laughing, "and she gives herself the airs of an empress."

"You need not laugh," gravely said Désirée; "that lady was Napoléon's friend; everybody knows it here. Napoléon was simply mad about her; he gave her a title. She has had a coronet engraved on all her jewels, and on every article in her house."

At ten o'clock the carriage was again there. I took my lantern up, and accompanied my master and his guest; he stepped into the carriage with her and said to me:—

"You need not wait for me, I have my keys."

I closed the gates, returned to the kitchen, where I left my lantern; then in the dark I went along the privet-hedge, and reached my room. A pungent sort of smell of pitch and tar half choked me; people say it is very wholesome, but it is certainly unpleasant when one is not accustomed to it.

I took stock of my room, it looked like a huge coffin newly done up for the long journey.

I took the inventory: an iron bedstead, a cupboard, two small benches fixed larboard and starboard, a shelf on which was a basin; opposite was a porthole; near the head of the bed a nail to hang one's watch on, that was all. The wainscoting showed traces of the Renaissance style; later on, I learnt that was the

work of an artistic wood sculptor, who came from the south and established himself at Étretat.

I went to bed, but I could not sleep. I heard a noise which seemed afar off, then it would come quite near me. It was the roaring of the waves coming across the land, rocking the sides of my poor boat, hoisted upon its brick walls, and lifting it up by their roll, just as when it was on the sea.

She had sailed for a good forty years, tossed about by the waves and now continued, groaning each time they hit her. After having carried turbots by hundred of tons, mackerel by hundreds of thousands, herrings and sardines by the million, after having glided peacefully along on the beautiful sunny days, and also suffered under awful blasts, she was now stranded at La Guillette, housing the servant of a great writer.

Next day my master asked if I was comfortable in my old boat, telling me how difficult it was to get one, "as all the owners of villas required them, and turned them into spare rooms."

After breakfast he opened the kitchen door, saying:—
"We have forgotten the bread for the goldfish."

That was the hour at which he used to pay them a visit. They knew it, and all awaited him at the surface of the water. Quantities of small birds had acquired the habit of being present at the feast. They flew all about my master, alighted at his feet; they were so numerous, so tame, and crowded so thickly about him, that he was obliged to take great care not to tread upon them.

The weather, magnificent when we arrived, changes for the worse ; the wind rises, the sea roars violently, our ten days come to an end and we can't prolong our stay, for the daily mail-bag from Paris grows heavier and heavier.

My master gives the gardener his instructions and a few notions about the spring plantations. Then, delighted, we start for Paris, of course in the celebrated brougham, the stable keeper possessing nothing better. At the Iffs station my master said to me :—

“ You will see how pretty this place is in the summer.”

True, the station, built on ground belonging to a splendid park, is surrounded by big trees ; one can see broad avenues, and in the distance a white chateau, with pointed gables.

It is cold. My master stamps about on the platform to warm his feet ; he hates the waiting-rooms, saying that “ in every country they smell of grease.”

In Paris I did my best to put the apartment into proper order. But I really did not know how to set about it.

There were books, pamphlets, newspapers, piled up against the walls, against the furniture, on the ground, anywhere. On the tables there were mountains of them. I cleaned and polished every day ; it was labour lost ; my master walked about from his wash handstand to his desk, with towels all dripping wet.

One day as the portress came up with a packet of letters I mentioned to her my distress at all this

litter. She told me that a short while ago, as my master was taking his revolver out of his pocket, he sent a bullet through his finger. "And I took care of him," added she, with immense pride. "Oh! *he* can stand pain! He might go to the wars, you would never hear *him* complain!"

"Well," said I, "was he not a soldier in 1870?"

"Yes, he fought; he was one of the eighteen-year-old recruits, and when he reached Rouen, he and his friends played a few tricks on the admiral who commanded the town; later, on some of the Prussians; when the Germans became masters of Rouen, he managed to get to Havre, where he took care of the small-pox patients, as if he were a sister of charity."

On December the 15th I was holding a calendar, when my master opened the drawing-room door. He looked gloomy.

The evening before he had been at a party at a Prince's house, and had brought home a red-haired young woman, not pretty, but rather pleasing. After breakfast she flew away, but not for long; she came back at four o'clock, had to wait till six, and at seven, she was off again, as my master was dining out.

The next day she was again there at nine in the morning. This lasted four days; after which my master said to me: "Do what you will with her, I don't want her any longer. . . . Every time she says she is going to Vienna, and she always comes back. . . . Put her out of the door if she forces you to do it!"

The invitations to dinners and evening parties used to pour in. One day we received seventeen!

"François," said my master, "prepare all we may want for two months, we shall start next week for Cannes, and when we come back we shall stay at my cousin L——'s in a more comfortable *appartement*. Here it is too confined, I can't breathe."

My master took the Rapide, I followed by the express. A porter awaited me at the station with a countersign.

Madame de Maupassant and her son, M. Hervé, occupied very pretty rooms.

My master took an *appartement* with a fine view of the sea, a bright place, well in the sun. It was immediately settled that his mother and brother should dine every day with him. His life became much quieter. He worked from nine till noon, then dressed and lunched.

Three times a week he went in the afternoon to a friend's house, to practise shooting with other amateurs.

One morning an odd-looking gentleman with a heavy moustache came to see "Monsieur de Maupassant." I told him my master was never at home in the morning. Then he wrote a few words on his card, and when he gave it to me he began to laugh, all the hair on his face bristling; he really looked like a brush.

My master was at work; I would not have disturbed him for worlds. I obeyed his orders. At noon I gave him the card. He read it aloud.

"Very well," said he, "I will go to him this afternoon."

The next morning this gentleman came to lunch

with his wife ; we saw him several days running. He talked tremendously, seemed to know heaps of things, and told such numerous tales about so many different countries, that the world really seemed quite small. He proposed to my master to found a club which would become very important, put Nice in the shade, and perhaps Monte-Carlo. He wrote down statutes, got excited, enthusiastic, declaring he could obtain an authorisation for the gambling tables, etc.

A few days later my master told me he was going to give a lunch to twelve gentlemen.

" We are about to form a limited company. . . . It is only a trick we intend playing on Count L——, the founder of the club. He will be the acting president, Comte O—— the honorary president and principal shareholder ; that is to say, he is to invest about a hundred and twenty thousand pounds ; Mr K—— is to be secretary, I, baron R——, P. A——, and a few others shall constitute the Board of Directors, and buy up the island of Ste Marguerite."

Twelve gentlemen came to lunch ; it was quite a serious meeting. Count O—— seemed gloomy, often passing his hand over the back of his head, his attitude being that of a man who is hesitating, asking himself if he may venture to engage in an affair of business, or whether it would not be more prudent to abstain. Though wealthy, a hundred and twenty thousand pounds are something ! . . .

Baron R. discreetly makes a remark to the future president about this hesitation of the principal shareholder, but M. P. A—— and my master show,

by rows of figures, and unimpeachable documents, that it is a first-class affair ; the principal shareholder is convinced and gives all his approbation, the other shareholders imitate him with most edifying unanimity.

The future president is purple with triumph and delight. . . . After lunch the whole Board of Directors, accompanied by the future dignitaries, walk towards the harbour.

The *Louissette* was awaiting them, so as to take them to the island of the Iron-Mask, of which they already called themselves the owners.

I was not a witness of the disappointment of the president when he learnt that the Island of Ste Marguerite was not for sale, but belonged to the State. I did not see him again till two years later, and then in Paris, somewhat altered, and already quite white-haired.

My master was finishing a novel which was to be published in April, the proofs arrived continuously, I was always on the way to the Post-Office. The smart people were coming by shoals to Cannes. My master received many invitations, which flowed in just as much as in Paris.

The Mediterranean fleet was at anchor in the Golfe de Juan ; my master wished to go and see the vessels. One day there were to be some manoeuvres out at sea, and I accompanied him to his boat, the *Louissette*, carrying a few things he wanted. He was going out alone, for the sea was very rough and the wind blew stiffly from the south-west. I watched him, going

off with his old boatman Galice, who at first sight looked beyond the age to go to sea at all.

That evening the old Jack-tar, who had brought back the different articles which were never left on board, took as usual a glass of good wine. When he had refreshed himself, and was more comfortable, he told me that during his whole career (a long one) as a sailor, he had never seen the equal of M. de Maupassant.

"He is so handy," said he, "his eyes are everywhere, and he knows the waves like an old sailor. His boldness sometimes is enough to make one shudder. This afternoon, with our light open boat, we had to cross enormous breakers, going towards the open sea. It was a rough business; but he did not seem tired, and went at it with all his heart!"

I thought the good fellow well deserved a second glass.

He went away, saying :—

"Now, I shall never be afraid when I am on the sea with M. de Maupassant."

One night, towards two in the morning, I heard master calling me.

"Come," said he, "I have set fire to my room; I struck a match and the phosphorus flew on to the bed curtains; they are in flames."

I rushed in, my wet apron tied round me, and another about my head. I threw bucketfuls of water on the bed, which was all on fire; the curtains and mosquito-net were already burnt up. I asked

my master to pass me the can of water, but as he put the huge porcelain jug on the sink he broke it.

"Now, don't burn yourself," said he; "I have got my manuscripts, the remainder is not very important."

The door of the room was burning; the jute hangings of the staircase had also caught fire; luckily we succeeded in tearing them off. Fortunately the window-panes did not crack, so there were no draughts to fan the flames.

The water I threw put the fire out. . . . Then, of course, the firemen came and finished the destruction of the remains of the bed and furniture.

My master went off and spent two days at Monte Carlo. When he came back, he found his room in proper order; but he saw with some annoyance that articles he rather cared about were spoiled, for instance some old books, his dictionaries, and a portfolio bound in antique leather. He set to work again but not with so much spirit. He got up later than before.

One day he went to see the bay of Agay and the Esterel mountains. Another time he drove with his mother to Vallauris, taking the Chemin de Californie through the village, where you see the porcelain factory of Massier brothers. In the evening my master and his mother talked during dinner about this excursion. He was delighted with the china he had bought for his little villa La Guillette. He talked about Messrs Massier, who were so civil, and such good men of business. He recalled all the details of the journey,

the view along the Corniche, the immense green slopes, the sea, the islands afar off. He seemed charmed, and as if describing a dream.

One morning M. de Maupassant told Galice that the first time a good breeze arose they would take the *Louissette* to Antibes.

"As to you, François," added he, "you are not to take my pistols again to the house of M. A——; we shall be off soon. I've had enough of this place! I can't go two steps in the street without taking off my hat to bow to all those Serene Highnesses who are swarming there. They invite me too often to dinner; it tires me and doesn't always amuse me. And my book is coming out; I must be in Paris."

On February the 27th, old Galice was there. The wind was all right. My master started with him to take the *Louissette* back to her moorings; I saw them pass the Croisette, and they were soon in the open sea.

I asked in the evening if the journey had been pleasant.

"Yes, at first," replied my master; "but after we had passed the Garousse the wind became fitful, blowing now from the east, now from the coast, with a tremendous ground-swell coming from the Gulf of Genoa. Two or three times the *Louissette* shipped a good deal of water, and poor Galice did not feel at all happy; I made him drink a glass of rum, and encouraged him, telling him that the worst was over, and when an hour afterwards we got into the harbour, Galice could not conceal his delight! Now he will

only have to take care of the *Louissette* safely anchored behind the jetty."

Paris.—My master is not satisfied. This is the 3rd of March; it is awfully cold and big flakes of snow are falling, making the streets quite impracticable for foot passengers. As my master does not care for driving, he hardly goes out, so he writes a few articles, and gives the finishing touches to his proofs.

About the 20th, as the weather gets better, he, with his upholsterers, sees to his new flat. It is decided that the dining-room is to be dark red, the drawing-room Louis-Seize-blue, the bedroom yellow, the winter-garden olive green. . . . The hangings are purchased without delay.

On April the 2nd, the day before the move, we pack up all the choice things, the plates, the old Rouen dishes, the valuable books.

On April the 3rd the upholsterer Kakléter and two workmen appear at the rue Montchanin. They open the packages and all the stuffs are unrolled. My master is perfectly happy. What fun for him, to have three men working under his orders! Kakléter and his customer begin the drawing-room, and in three days the hangings and the curtains are up. For three weeks M. de Maupassant works hard at furnishing the rooms, with only an occasional afternoon off. Many of the articles occupied temporary habitats before they found their final destinations. There were two angels' heads in wood, with distended cheeks, intended for the gods of the wind, which went

about everywhere ; at last they found a home in the conservatory.

Then Kakléter brought the shelves of the bookcase. That was the piece of furniture that pleased me the most. At last I should be able to put the books in order. There would be no more on the ground, along the walls, and around the legs of the tables ; the bureau would be a little less encumbered. The bookcase was a real relief, and I hastened to help my master to place the books on the shelves as he classified them.

When all was finished, my master told the upholsterer to send his bill in at once.

"One can breathe better here," said he, walking about the flat, and looking about him. "Kakléter is uncommonly strong ; when driving a nail in, he moderates his blow and does not break the nail ! Those angels' heads weigh a hundred and thirty pounds ; when he fixed them up he held them at arm's length ; and he's very quick ; he's a very clever workman. What I admire above all, is his calmness, for I must confess I have often given him cause for impatience, and he's never shown the least temper. My friend, M. M——, who told me about him, has really found a treasure. Of course, M—— is a connoisseur ! If you could see his little ground-floor, and how delightfully it is arranged ! His study is entirely hung with a light blue-green stuff, charmingly soft for the eye, and extremely pretty."

The painting of the bathroom alone remained to be done ; my master put that off "till next time I go

away," said he. He could not stand the smell of paint, nor could he bear the presence of painters, who, in the rue Dulong, he said, had robbed him of a jewelled pin and a pretty ring left him by his grandfather.

We were in the beginning of May.

"I feel better," said M. de Maupassant. "I am warmer, on account of the fires you keep up in all the rooms; but I am not at all inclined to work. Go to the bookseller's shop on the right, rue du Bac, as you leave the Pont Royal, buy me a map of the Seine, from Paris to Rouen. I shall go down the river in a yawl, as far as Rouen, with M. A——; that will take four days. During that time you will prepare all we want for Étretat. We will go there as soon as I come back."

My master took the train, so as to start on the yawl from Maisons-Laffite. But he had left his map; I saw it and took it to him. I arrived just in time to see the embarkation. M. A—— was coxswain; my master took up the oars, rubbed his palms with some sort of composition, threw a last glance over his boat, and nodded to the thirty persons who had come to see him off. Then, imitating the motion of a large bird taking its flight, slowly, with a measured stroke, he plunged his oars into the water. A few minutes later, I could only perceive at a distance a black spot on the silvery sheet of the Seine, illuminated by the rays of the brilliant sun of spring. Every connoisseur said my master was a first-class rower. I was very pleased to hear these praises.



BISKRA, 26 OCT., 1890. OUR GUIDE'S WIFE

When he returned, M. de Maupassant told me the weather had been splendid, but that poor M. A—— was not strong enough to take such a long journey.

"Constantly," added he, "I had to take the oars from him, and sometimes I rowed for four hours without stopping."

CHAPTER II

JUNE—OCTOBER 1884

Étretat—A model gardener—Pistol-firing—Hens and a cock—
Watering the strawberries—Playing at bowls—The two
wooden saints—The spare room—The young American lady
—The Fox—A fire in the house—Marie Seize—October—
Autumn leaves—*Bel Ami* is finished.

ETRETAT, *June* 1884.—We are among the first who have arrived at Étretat. My master takes advantage of the fact to have a rest ; and also to work at a tale, when not writing articles for newspapers.

He is much occupied with his garden ; he spends hours with Cramoyson discussing where the flower beds are going to be placed. It is necessary to see which of the trees have grown the most rapidly, so as to choose the kind it would be best, according to the nature of the soil, to plant in the future.

Up at eight, he won't take any breakfast ; he says it prevents his working, and protests that milk and coffee in the morning constitute a meal only fit for a woman. He walks several times round his garden, pays a visit to his goldfish, goes in to bathe his eyes ; very often he writes till eleven o'clock, then he takes his cold tub, dresses, and lunches. After which, every day, he takes his pistol, and fires off from forty to fifty bullets. He begins by firing ten shots at a mark

at the distance of twenty paces ; then ten at word of command ; then ten bullets at a mark, at forty paces distance, and ten at word of command ; " One, Two, Three " ; the last twenty always with a double load. When he is satisfied with his shooting he fires ten more bullets, but he hardly ever fires more, " For," as he says, " it is useless, and you may spoil a good shot."

Of course the provision of bullets brought from Paris soon came to an end ; François Jeanne was then asked for some old lead, and my master taught me how to make the missiles. I was able, quite at the outset, to turn out five or six hundred of them in an afternoon.

" See," said he, " how skilful you are already ! and don't you find it most amusing ! Only be careful that the spoon does not slip into the water, as then the boiling lead would fly into your eyes ; it's very dangerous. I should like you to wear spectacles, as I should be less anxious."

With a pair of glasses on my nose I managed to cast a thousand bullets in an afternoon, and to find it quite an entertaining occupation.

About half-past two or three o'clock, M. de Maupassant sometimes goes to have a look at the sea ; more frequently at half-past five.

One day, as we were talking about the cooking, my master told me the butcher Vimont had excellent meat.

" You know him ? He's uncommonly strong ! *His* flesh isn't flabby ! I think he has twelve children. And how he drinks champagne ! I've known him

drink sometimes fourteen bottles ! . . . Ah ! I say, François, I have an idea, I should like to keep some hens, so as to be sure to have fresh eggs for breakfast ; you might boil me some eggs every day. Tell the woman to bring six hens and a fine cock, the finest she can sell me ! I'll ask Cramoyson to make me a fence directly with iron trellis-work, next the shed where the wood is kept, large enough for the fowls to have sufficient grass and things to peck at."

Two days after, the hens came with a splendid cock, he had a most remarkable crest and a gold-coloured throat.

My master told me to take the greatest care of them, and give the fowls mashies made of bread, bran, and milk.

" And I," said he, " will give them seed."

Cramoyson put a sackful in the shed.

My master went many times a day to see his gold-fish, but he liked particularly to linger near the hens ; he was never tired of looking at them, observing with much amusement all their ways. I must say they were most beautiful, and the cock soon grew ruddier than when he came.

" Isn't he handsome, that fellow ! " my master used to say. " I should like to be a painter ; certainly I should make a most successful picture of him. Look at the expression of his head. How proud his eye is ! And his superb crest, so gorgeously scarlet ! Then his shining, shaded throat, how brilliant ; and such a majestic presence ! Look at his tail. What a magnificent plume ! But in general, the bird does not keep his tail very long. The eggs are excellent, their

taste is so superior to that of the Paris egg. Tell the dealer that for the month of July I shall require six more good laying hens, for by that time these will be exhausted."

The garden flourished ; Cramoyson informed us some French beans were ready for picking ; and the peas were in flower. " Yes," said my master, " they are very fine. You must know, François, that I eat neither carrots, cabbage, or sorrel. And particularly no spinach ! Cramoyson will bring you as many French beans, broad beans, peas, as he can, and all kinds of salads to cook. You may give me cooked salad every day, of course, done up in fresh cream."

One day, examining his roses, M. de Maupassant observed a small tree on the edge of the path. He showed it to Cramoyson.

" Look how that ash tree has grown in a year ! Since this ground suits it, we will plant a row in the meadow along the hedge ; for the sycamores do not prosper ; really they do not give much shade. Before the house, on the side of the path along the big hedge, we will add a few white poplars. They grow very quickly, and are bright to look at."

I had brought from Paris a small Japy pump with the pipes for watering the whole length of the garden, on both sides. It was most convenient ; one of us pumped, while the other directed the pipe ; a much quicker proceeding than with watering-pots, and less tiring.

" Thus, Cramoyson," observed my master, " when you are not on the spot I will assist François to keep

the strawberries sufficiently damp, so that we may have the fruit without any interruption."

The small sucking and forcing pump, installed close to the large pump, which occupied already the top of the well, looked like a small plaything, and I think my master considered it as such, for he was constantly making it play, saying :—

"That is to prevent the liquid being wasted."

When it was time to water, it was always his turn to stand at the pump. When I offered to replace him, he sent me away, saying that I knew better than he how to distribute the water gently, as if it were rain. Thus it was better that I should hold the nozzle.

On the 22nd of June we received the visit of a lady ; on the 24th there came another lady, and we gave a dinner-party of eight people.

They began to play at bowls. My master was delighted ; it was a pleasure to hear him laugh when he had played well, or when he could displace the bowls the ladies had "laid down," which made them run about, screaming like so many children.

One morning he told us to shake all the apples down, so that the sap of his young trees should not become exhausted.

The mornings of each day are spent in the same way. My master walks about and works, but after lunch he never leaves the large hedge on the side of the garden looking towards Étretat. There is an opening in that hedge, through which he can see the ladies coming from the bottom of the Pass, and leaving Justin's riding-school. As soon as he catches

sight of them he hastens to get the bowls out, or else he sets the croquet hoops.

And the games must begin directly. Often he did not even give the ladies time to take their hats and cloaks off in the house. Their wraps had to be spread out on the small thorn-hedge separating the meadow from the garden ; and the game began immediately. The player threw himself into it with such ardour that one might question if the author of *A Life* paid any attention to the amiable speeches of the ladies, the high but sweet tones in which they cried : " Very well, dear fellow ! " or " Now mind, my friend ! " all of which the echo of the Fécamp coast repeated slowly, but most accurately.

On the 20th, night was falling when I saw on the path to the kitchen a tall woman pushing a well-laden barrow. It was the forewoman of the old curiosity shop, the Vieux Rouen, bringing the articles my master had bought that day.

Showing me two wooden saints among the lot, my master said : " Look how well they are sculptured ; it is very fine work, and I am pleased with them, because they are saints belonging to the country over the water, and yet there is nothing English about them ! "

The other purchases were spread about in every direction, principally in the spare room ; he wanted it to look bright, because a married couple was soon to stay there. Then with care worthy of a good housekeeper, he took note of all that was still wanting in the room ; a box for *poudre de riz*, perfume

bottles, a three-leaved mirror for hair-dressing, and a pincushion.

"This afternoon I will buy all these," said he; "is there a writing pad, with paper, pens and blotting book? Yes! That's all right! . . ."

A young American lady, who had published many novels in France, was the first to occupy the room on which he had lavished so much care. This lady was as intelligent as she was beautiful. One morning as the girl who attended her was not there to give her her breakfast, she said to me:—

"François, you can very well come into my room and put the tray on the table, it does not disturb me, as I am quite covered up with the bedclothes."

Another time this same lady, in the midst of a discussion on literary subjects, said to my master: "All your critics, who take such infinite trouble to analyse a new work, make me laugh, for really literature is not so complicated. I have never learnt French, I write out all the words, trusting to the analogies, and yet, as you know well, they accept my books! If they talked to me," she added, "about the great difficulty two people who thoroughly love each other find in reaching a complete understanding! . . . in feeling absolute happiness when together! . . . you understand what I mean . . . well, if that happens they are immediately separated by an abyss!"

My master did not laugh, he looked gloomy, and I observed a nervous contraction of his eyes. I did not hear his answer, for he begged me to bring the next dish. . . .

A few years afterwards he sent me to the hotel Meyerbeer (at the Rond-point of the Champs-Élysées) to inquire after this lady's health. A page led me to her room. I had hardly reached the threshold when the lady exclaimed :—

"Come in, come in, François! come and sit down by the bed, you know I'm not a fool!" I sat down as she told me, and she asked for news of my master.

"Tell me all about him," said she; "that subject will never tire me."

When I had talked for a long time, as she wished, she said with some emotion :—

"Well, my good François, you have almost penetrated the nature of a man who does not make himself known to others; to understand him, one must live near him as I have done. . . . You are aware that I not only love your master as a literary man, but I love him for himself, as they say in my country :¹ 'for his good heart, for his extreme loyalty, and his great kindness.' On that table lies the paper on which I have transcribed the whole of our conversation of the day before yesterday. That dear kind friend remained with me the entire afternoon, he was loth to go away. We wondered if that would be our last interview; for, François, in two or three days I am to undergo an operation; and we never know what the result may be. But tell my friend Maupassant that if I die under chloroform, my last thought will be for him. . . ."

¹ In English in the text.

I gave my master this message, and he was deeply touched by it.

For a long time I seemed to see this lady's beautiful face ; she had magnificent golden hair, which a lace fichu could hardly restrain. It harmonized with her beautiful complexion ; she really *was* lovely !

July.—The games of bowls are most successful. My master is in excellent health. Friends come, two rooms are given them. Luckily they sleep till eleven o'clock, which allows master to work all the morning. After lunch he takes them to the seashore, or else to Saint-Jouin, to the "Belle Ernestine's" Inn. He gave a few dinner-parties, and the evenings were extremely merry. They used to play the handkerchief game, and the newcomers could not understand anything about it, but they had to play, and once started they went into the fun and laughed more than the usual players. Certainly it was the game that most pleased my master.

One morning, as I was coming home with my provisions, I saw my master in the meadow, surrounded by all his hens. He called me to him : "Come and see this enormous hole in the fence of the field, the trellis-work is all turned up, and the ground underneath is deeply hollowed out. No doubt it's a fox ! The rascal has smelt the fowls ! But he'll meet his match ! . . . I shall write off to Paris to-day, so as they may send me immediately a trap. I know all about it, and Cramoyson also ; we'll quickly do for that fox !"

My master walked back with me to the house, always

followed by his hens ; they seemed to understand he was seeing to their safety. He had some trouble to get rid of them while passing through the small grating which divided the meadow from the garden.

When Cramoyson arrived my master showed him the hole, and requested him to put all in order, and strengthen the trellis-work, whilst awaiting the arrival of the wolf trap.

August.—Every day after this event, my master, as soon as he was up, examined the condition of the carré normand. The trap came ; it was a sort of infernal machine, rather dangerous to handle. It was placed behind the sheds where the hens roosted ; it was thought the mischievous animal would come and be trapped, attracted by the scent of the fowls.

September.—"While I think of it," ordered M. de Maupassant, "I should wish you to carry, now and again, a basket of pears to the Post-Office ladies, and also to Madame C——. She is the daughter of Offenbach, the great composer. It is not on account of the pears, but I know she values any attention that is paid her very much. . . . She was deeply affected by the loss of her brother ; her sorrow was great and lasting. I also was extremely sorry for the death of that poor fellow. I was much attached to him ; he was a kind and sincere comrade, and he was only twenty-two !"

On September the 12th my kitchen oven refused to be lighted ; to persuade it, I administered a few spoonfuls of fat ; in a couple of minutes the chimney was on fire. My master, hearing the crackling of the

sparks, came and told me. We went into the garden and saw the sparks caught up by the wind.

"That will do no harm," said my master; "still we must be careful, for my first villa, the one I had before this one, was burnt down, and I never knew how it had caught fire. True, it was lightly built, and the roof was thatched. We were playing in the garden when we saw the fire bursting out everywhere. As we had no means of quenching the flames, we all began to sing and dance round this impromptu bon-fire!"

One evening at the end of September, as night was falling, I heard loud voices in the garden in the vicinity of my boat. I drew near, and beheld my master talking to Marie Seize, a celebrity of the local "Bohemia." I ran back to my kitchen, and master followed immediately.

"There's a woman for you!" he exclaimed. "What a burr she is! Never saw anyone to equal her! Fancy, all these years she used to sleep in the boats on the seashore, with her husband and her six children; and to get rid of her the parish hired a hut for her up there, at the top of the cliff. I have always helped her, but really this year she goes too far! I have given her ten francs more than twenty times; as she dare not come here, she constantly waits for me when I pass; now she has been telling me she, her husband, and her children have not a rag to wear this winter; that I must clothe them, unless I wish to see them die of cold! I have given twenty francs. But if she comes back, send her packing! . . ."

While my master sat at table he went on talking about Marie Seize.

"Oh! isn't she cunning! She comes at night-fall, because she daren't go out in the day; she has nothing on but a wretched petticoat, and a bodice in tatters; her feet, her legs, her arms are bare. You must confess she is a most extraordinary creature, and so dirty! She is disgusting! When she complains to me, she always says: 'M. de Maupassant, if you don't assist me, the only thing left for me to do is to throw myself into the sea with all my children. Yes, into the sea; I'll tie them up together, and into the sea they'll go!' There! As if 'twas already done! But I feel quite easy on that score."

Hardly a week had elapsed when my master called me one morning, desiring me to see who was walking up the avenue. 'Twas again Marie Seize, coming to say she had no more coals, and no money to buy any.

"Very well," said he, without a moment's thought, "give her ten francs."

October.—The last apples have been picked up, the leaves are falling fast, the trees no longer keep enough foliage to shelter my master on his morning walks; and he is obliged to wear his shooting boots, because the damp earth clings so heavily to one's feet. But some charm seems to detain him.

"How exquisite is the autumn in the country," he exclaims, "the fresh air filling one's lungs gives such an agreeable sensation. . . . Then how romantic is the fall of the leaves, and so interesting! Before they fall off, they take on such varied colours! I have

seen some pass through five or six gradations of shade ; it is most fascinating to watch those of the white poplar."

October 26th.—Towards two I carried his pittance to the cock and his last companion, all the others having ended their lives in the stewpan. My master walked round the pond, and followed me to see his cock fed. He held a branch of fuchsia. "I have finished *Bel Ami*," said he, "and I hope the book will satisfy those who are always asking me for something lengthy ; for there are pages upon pages, and so closely written ! There is one part for the ladies which will interest them, I do believe. As to the journalists, they'll take what they like of it ; I am waiting for them ! . . . Favoured by that beautiful bright sun," added he, "I might photograph those two fowls, which look as if they were deserted !"

He tried his best, but they did not come out well, and I do not know why. A lady then appeared and she photographed my master ; she succeeded in obtaining a small picture.

CHAPTER III

NOVEMBER 1884—FEBRUARY 1885

Shower-baths—The conservatory—Purchases—Piroli—A New Year's gift—A wonderful ceiling—A journey to Italy—The return—Badly packed—The piece of rock-sulphur—Work and social life—The schoolboy's dinner—A Dutch sleigh—Étretat—Normandy in blossom—The old Roman vases—The real China basin—*Bel Ami* is published.

PARIS, November 1884.—“You see, François, I shall be very comfortable here with that heating apparatus. It is cleverly put up; [heats well, perhaps rather too much; but when the air holes are opened upstairs in my cousin's flat, the heat in mine will abate. Then you tell me it only costs a franc a day; that's nothing in comparison with the expense of woodfires. . . . I am going down with you to look at the stove.”

I opened the two upper doors, showing the four red plates of the stove, and my master felt the tremendous heat.

“How can you stand near it when you fill it up? It is like the infernal regions!”

He thought for a minute.

“Since I am down here,” said he, “let us see if in the first wine-cellar I can't put up a shower-bath, as it is close to the heating apparatus it would be delightful to take a shower-bath here.”

The architect was sent for, and the thing was done, to my master's great satisfaction.

"What a good idea I've had! the town water gives a more than sufficient pressure, and see how simple it is. Now, I can take my shower-bath every day, without leaving my house; even two if I like. Certainly a bath, a tub, and a shower-bath are the best things for a man's health."

Then my master added, with emphasis:—

"Fancy! Flaubert never would have anything to do with a water-cure, not even massage! What a pity . . . he would not have died so young. But he never would spare a thought for hygiene. Only think! He was but sixty when he died; he was strong and still full of vitality; no doubt a shower-bath, like this, would have prolonged his life!

A few days afterwards my master sends for the upholsterer to fix up the saints; they are placed in the conservatory, one on each side of the Buddha; then the hangings are put up, dividing it from the bedroom, into which, unluckily, they prevent the light from coming, and as there is only half a window looking on to the courtyard, my master says to Kakléter:—

"You have arranged my conservatory very well; it is all very pretty, but with those hangings I don't get any air in my room! If I don't put them up, the light, striking at night on my eyes, will harm them, so I shall buy a pair of Japanese blinds, made of rushes and beads; these will soften the light, but I shall at least have more air in my room."

This was done, and M. de Maupassant was quite satisfied.

He was very much pleased with the conservatory, a sort of winter garden always filled with palm trees, plants, and flowers; and there he usually sat. There he found the restful quiet, and the necessary light for his work. Every day he brought some article home to embellish his apartment. One evening he gave me a parcel.

"Please unpack this most carefully," said he, "for it contains Venetian glass scent-bottles; they are beautiful and most valuable. They are just what I want, as they contain two pints each. As I use a great deal of scent, one will be for eau-de-Cologne, another for lavender water. I will see what I shall do with the two others. . . ."

December.—Cold has come, but my master never misses taking his baths, etc., every day. He said the water was extremely cold; and he was delighted, because afterwards a glowing reaction used to set in. One day, the water being even colder than usual, my master rushed quickly upstairs, his heavy moustache still quite wet.

"It is perfect! You give a splendid shower-bath; soon I might take you for a pupil of Pascal, the celebrated *doucheur*!"

I was always so pleased when my master was satisfied, and quickly followed, to rub him well with eau-de-Cologne, after which he freely used a horse-hair glove.

"Look here, François," said he one day, "I think

that for this ground floor we ought to keep a cat; its presence would send away rats and mice, and it is better to prevent them coming than to have to get rid of them ! ”

A few days afterwards we took in a kitten my master called Piroli. She soon became very tame, and was very fond of being petted. She was always playing about, often with the Japanese blinds ; this used to last sometimes for hours, and my master, extended on his couch in the conservatory, loved admiring the pretty little creature, with her graceful, supple motions. He became very much attached to little Piroli, and the liking was reciprocated. The moment he came in she never left him.

“ To-morrow,” said my master on Christmas Eve, “ I shall give a dinner party. But on New Year’s Day I shall dine out, as you will be very busy. . . . One of these days you will take a carriage, in which you will place two large clothes-baskets ; then you will visit those little booths erected on the boulevards, where you can find innumerable sets of cheap and amusing articles just created by Parisian taste ; you will buy several of the same kind, anything which seems to you comical or interesting. Don’t forget to buy some of those bearded little devils that start up as you take off the lid of the box. . . . I’ll tell you what to do with them on New Year’s Day.”

The day before New Year’s Eve I came in with my two baskets filled with what I had bought in the little booths. My master spread out all the contents, made his choice, and the next day he filled up several

cases, one of which he was very careful about ; on the top, just inside the cover, he put a whole row of those "bearded devils" he had told me to buy. We had taken care to undo the hooks, so that it was the cover of the case which held them in their boxes.

"This one," said he, "is for Madame O——. You will carry it to her at the hour of lunch, and you must beg the butler to give it her directly. Tell him the cover must be taken off on the dining-room table ; insist on his doing what I say."

On the first of the year, at noon, I was in Madame O——'s pantry, arguing with the butler, who would not listen to anything I said.

"You understand," said he, "there are people lunching, I can't take your case in."

"Never mind the people," replied I ; "on the contrary, the more the merrier !"

At last I convinced him, and explained to him how he must take off the cover with a rush. Five minutes hardly had elapsed when I heard a most extraordinary uproar. They moved their chairs, they laughed, they stamped for joy ! I was just going away when the butler came out of the dining-room.

"They are laughing till they cry," said he ; "here's to our next merry meeting !"

When I was dressing my master that evening I told him the trouble I had had in getting the butler to take the case into the room.

"I am not at all astonished at that," said he, "all those butlers of big establishments are alike. They

are as tall as an organ-loft, and often serve very badly, having manners like sham sacristans. I think one is much better cared for in houses where they keep only two maids. . . . But you heard them all laughing. The trick evidently was rather a success ; that's all I wanted."

He took his hat up. "It is uncommonly cold to-night," said he ; "put Piroli in her basket next the hot-air hole, and leave all the air holes of the flat open. When I come in I will close them if I think proper. "

On January the 6th (twelfth night) my master had a few friends to dinner, painters and literary men. When every one was gone, and I was preparing his bed, he took me into the conservatory.

"You can't imagine how I love this corner. Well, I am going to improve it. My friend Oudinot, the painter on glass, is selling me a ceiling in coloured glass, which was made for an American who has vanished. It appears this ceiling is most beautiful, which does not surprise me since Oudinot's work is always splendid ; that man has the soul of an artist. He painted the glass windows at M. Thiers' monument at Père-Lachaise, and they are marvellous. So, as soon as you can, you will go and see the architect, the locksmith, the plumber, and the electrician ; you must get them to come here, all of them, at the same hour, so as they may understand each other and make no delays. I want to settle everything with them before I start for Italy. There must be an electric machine for the light. I shall make them put it up

above the ceiling. Through the coloured glass that will give a pretty light and very soft tones. As soon as I shall have settled everything with them about the work, I shall be off to Italy and Sicily with some of my friends, Gervex, Amic, etc. . . . But it will be but a short trip, a month or six weeks at most, as I must be at work so as to publish a volume at the end of May. I shall start towards the 18th, somewhat before my friends, so as to stay a few days with my mother at Cannes. You'll see that everything is ready, and my shirts prepared by that person who is such a good worker."

All was ready on January the 17th. My master went off; his principal order was this:—

"If you go away for more than a day, you must send Piroli to my cousin's, and tell the maid to take good care of her. Then, please, hasten the workmen, so that I may find none of them here when I return; I want to work in peace."

February.—My master is at Rome, with his friends Gervex, G. Legrand, etc. They are all having a great deal of fun.

March.—I receive some small packages from Girgenti (Sicily). They seem to be in a very bad condition.

March the 28th.—M. de Maupassant arrived from Italy at eight in the morning, and the moment he stepped into the hall Piroli recognised his voice, rushed in and threw herself between his legs, mewing with delight.

"Good morning, my little kitten," he said, "but

first let me come in"; but she would not listen, he had to take her in his arms, she cried so piteously.

"Well, you must pay the coachman, since I must give myself up to this Piroli. How she's altered! She is a splendid cat!"

Then Piroli, having jumped on to the bureau while my master was reading the most important of his letters, was arching her back and purring, trying to put her paws on her master's chest, nuzzling at his moustache as if she was going to kiss him. He did not get through his correspondence without some trouble.

While he was at breakfast my master admired the ceiling, and called me to learn how to handle the lighting apparatus, and how to manipulate the electric machine by which it worked. He went two or three times through the performance, and was quite satisfied.

"Everything goes well," said he, "these twelve lights go up at once. I am sure it will look uncommonly well in the evening. The ceiling is beautiful, the tints are soft and charming to the eye. The room looks much more agreeable with that ceiling; the twelve lights will warm and dry everything; the damp and cold will be checked by the glass roof. I shall hide that wall with some Genoese stuffs; that nasty painting will disappear, as well as those green hangings, which are extremely ugly. Thus transformed the conservatory will be turned into a boudoir. When there are a few people in the other drawing-room, you can make visitors come in here. Then,

once my room is closed, this will form a separate little apartment."

We returned to the dining-room; the cases my master had sent from Italy were on the sideboard. I had left almost all the articles in their boxes, so as my master might see how badly they had been packed. They had been done up in a small piece of paper that was all torn. Naturally everything was broken, excepting two small statuettes somewhat more solid than the rest. When he saw this disaster my master turned very red, but he was able to control himself.

"As the things were not well packed," said he, "the railway people are not in fault. It is those beasts of shopkeepers! But they evidently settle between themselves that everything must be badly packed, for I bought all these curios at different places. . . . It is perhaps the fashion to pack in that way in their country. . . . They are such extraordinary creatures! They are revolting, filthy, and disgusting; and in spite of everything they are as beautiful as their country, which contains wonders, I must confess, in the shape of palaces and museums. Their galleries are full of innumerable riches, and are most perfect. Around all these beautiful objects there grovels an unclean population: the contrast is both striking and mournful. All these exquisite objects lose greatly their charm by being placed among such surroundings.

"Ah! you are unpacking my trunk, François? Give me a piece of rock-sulphur which is at the bottom."

I gave it to him, and he saw it was beginning to crumble.

"I fetched it myself from the bottom of a mine. We started, fifteen or sixteen of us, with the intention of going down; I left them all scattered on the way. I went with the guide, alone, on to the end. I can't tell you it was very pleasant. No! The way was difficult, the smell abominable, but I would not have had anyone say I hadn't the pluck to follow a guide into a sulphur-mine!"

Pirolì, who never ceased to rub herself against my master's legs, received some of the dust of the sulphur in her eyes. She began to mew, and raced round the room like a mad thing; it was not easy to catch her and wipe her eyes. My master was so sorry about it that he was ready to throw the stone out of the window.

"Certainly," said he, "all is unlucky that comes from that country!" and taking Pirolì on to his lap he caressed her, saying:—

"Poor little thing! my pretty one!"

When she had calmed down he said: "François, prepare my dress-suit for this evening, I dine with Madame X—, and go afterwards to the theatre; this lady wishes to introduce me to M. Raymond Deslandes. Every one keeps telling me I ought to write plays, but it does not appeal to me; and if I did so, it would surely not be in the style of what has been done hitherto. I hate that tricky sort of thing. No! no! I shall never consent to that. Every time I go to the theatre I come out horrified.

Were it not for the charming society one always meets there I should never set foot inside one. I confess I should prefer my bed this evening to this party, and yet I slept pretty well from Cannes to Paris. . . ."

My master is working again; he writes a few articles for the papers, so as to be able afterwards to dedicate all his time to his new novel.

April.—One Sunday my master consulted his pocket-book.

"I am dining out," says he, "every day this week excepting Tuesday. On that day a few friends are coming; you will cook the usual dinner; we shall be fourteen. On Friday, however, we shall only be four; still I wish the dinner to be good: indeed, you might prepare two kinds of dishes, one with meat, the other without, for I think the ladies will only eat vegetables and fish; as to the boy, who will be the fourth at table, he will take his choice."

On Friday, at the dinner-hour, there came two extraordinarily smart ladies, both very stout, very handsome, and wafting the sweetest scents. Then the bell rings again, I open the door, and a schoolboy stands before me. I ushered him into the dining-room. He entered gracefully, bowed first to master and then to the ladies, rather awkwardly, just like a flurried schoolboy.

But once at table he soon regained his self-possession, and told quantities of amusing stories about schools, like a fellow who knows all about those barracks full of boys. He was handsome, with a

pretty mouth, a little down on the upper lip, an aquiline nose, delicate nostrils, large dark eyes; and his hair curled as closely as a young negro's.

Champagne flowed during the whole meal. By the time desert came all were merry; tiny feet were advanced under the table, and the scene became most comical. The ladies attacked the young fellow, who kept a bold front, and though showing occasionally a slight timidity, he did not hesitate to say that he would gladly prove to them that he was both plucky and amiable. They laughed loudly, but the schoolboy did not, and seemed to play his part with great earnestness. My master was twisting in his fingers a *marron glacé* in its little paper hood; he no longer ate, or drank, or laughed; he gnawed his moustache, sometimes pulled at his little imperial, and drew it between his teeth. Suddenly he glanced at me; I saw his eyes were red and moist.

"François," said he, "please give us the coffee."

At half-past nine I went to fetch a carriage for the young schoolboy, who was due home by ten. My master accompanied him to the door, and squeezing his hand, said emphatically:—

"To our next merry meeting, my young friend."

The ladies wished to know who this charming youth could be; they were never told. . . .

The next morning I brought in my master's tea and began to put things in order. He begged me to assist him in altering the position of some of the furniture. While we were busy he was laughing to himself. Suddenly he said:—

"Well, François, what did you think yesterday about that schoolboy?"

"I thought him quite a charming fellow, sir."

Then my master roared with laughter.

"Indeed, you thought him charming! Why, man, 'twas a girl! You remember the little school-teacher who came last year to ask me to recommend her to the Secretary for Public Instruction; that's she! . . . She got the post she wanted, and wrote to thank me. I remembered her boyish look, and asked her to come and play this small part, in which she was perfectly successful. She lives with her mother, and is a very honest girl. But did you see how the ladies looked? They went away convinced it was a Condorcet school-boy. I can't tell you how amused I was. I shall certainly play the same trick on some other people!"

April the 9th.—My master, having dressed to pay some visits, asked me if I intended to go out that afternoon. "Because," said he, "I bought a Dutch sleigh yesterday, and should like you to be there when they bring it."

The next day master asked me to help him to measure a piece of Louis-XVI.-blue silk. He wanted to see if there would be enough of it to cover his sleigh.

"For see, François, how hideous is the yellow covering. But it will be very pretty done up in that blue silk; the shape of the sleigh is quite original. Look at those large flowers that follow the shape of the back; they are not very delicately traced, but the colours are of the period, and quite in the Dutch style.

Send a line to my upholsterer Kakléter, begging him to come and work at it. . . . I'll send him a telegram that will hurry him. This is the 10th. I must not forget that on the 14th I give a dinner party to some journalists ; the 18th or 19th we'll go and spend a few days at Étretat. I want to make some arrangements for next summer, as I have good shooting over all the ground belonging to that large farm, Martin-de-Bordeaux-Saint-Clair, and the surrounding woods ; there are first-rate rabbit-warrens ; you'll see, in the autumn, you'll have plenty of rabbits to put into your saucepans. I must also examine my mother's houses at Étretat. I shall ask you to help me, so as to see they are well furnished, at least as far as is necessary, so that this year we may succeed in letting them."

On April the 16th my master said to me : " We start to-morrow for Étretat. I have written to Cramoyson to have the fires kindled. I am taking a friend with me, M. B—— ; he knows nothing about Normandy, and he will see it for the first time under its prettiest aspect."

At ten o'clock on the 17th we reached the Ifs station ; the everlasting brougham was awaiting us. When I had closed the door I climbed on to the seat, the gentlemen had put the windows down, and I heard all their conversation. We reached a *carré normand* ; all the fruit trees were in blossom. I asked the coachman to slow down, which he did most civilly, only too happy to please M. de Maupassant. Thus the gentlemen were able to admire the beautiful

sight quite at their ease. My master's friend was delighted, and most enthusiastic when he saw these innumerable pink, mauve, violet, and white flowers of the freshest and softest hues forming immense coloured plots, encircled by a wide border of light green turf. It is that which in Normandy is called "a moat." We could see here and there a few thatched roofs, laden with the brown and silvery moss of the lichen, surrounded by these lovely flowers. Through the gaps in the elm plantation forming the entrance of the farm this beautiful panorama became visible beneath a marvellously pure blue sky, and my master's friend was constantly repeating :—

"How pretty ! how exquisite ! It is fairyland !"

We were just reaching the last houses of Bordeaux-Saint-Clair when my master said to me :—

"You have seen, François, how beautiful it all is !"

Cramoyson was awaiting us on the threshold of la Guillette ; my master shook hands with him.

"Good morning, my good Cramoyson ; how do you do ?"

Cramoyson was delighted to see us.

"Thank you, thank you, sir," replied he. "And how are you ?"

The provisions had all been brought.

At noon I told the gentlemen that lunch was on the table. They were quite ready. When people have been up since six o'clock their appetite is whetted. The scrambled eggs with cream and Vimont's excellent cutlets did not remain long on the table. When the meal was over my master glanced at me.

"Have you food in the kitchen for you and Cramoyson?"

"Yes, yes, sir, thank you."

He thought of everything.

Our four days were quite filled up by examining his mother's houses and preparing for the shooting party, buying dogs, etc. At last my master said one morning:—

"Pack up the two large old Rouen vases; you will put them in the two big cases of Châtel-guyon water. See that they are well packed; I should be miserable if anything happened to them. They are very fine, and extremely rare, and I inherited them from my grandfather, who was a great lover of beautiful things. He possessed a most interesting collection in his old Norman château. He loved hunting too, had splendid horses, and certainly the cleverest pack of hounds in all Normandy."

Paris, April 24th.—My master called me.

"I do not know if it is the journey, but I have an awful headache. I am going to rub the back of my neck with vaseline, and if at eleven I am not better I shall inhale a little ether."

At twelve he took his shower-bath, a foot-bath with mustard in it, and lunched lightly at one o'clock. He felt much better in the evening, and was able to dine out.

A few days later he said to me after lunch:—

"I am going to see my publisher on the other side of the water; I shall dine out in my jacket, so you need not wait for me."

The next day they brought an old basin of porcelain.

"See, François," said my master, "that's what I found yesterday; 'tis real China, and I did not pay too much for it."

He placed it on the washstand, two-thirds of which it covered.

"The basin's rather big," added he, "but not too big for me; it must be that size to allow me to wash my head in it. . . . I bought other articles at Mademoiselle Guillan's, which they will bring directly. Everything's paid for, you only have to pay the porter." Then he took his little Piroli on to the sofa, and talked to her: "Yes, yes, you would like to go and walk about, but here you can't, you would lose yourself. Patience, you will be able to run about at Étretat. How you will skip about on the grass! How many new things for you to see—the trees, the birds, the fishes!" and he stroked her, repeating: "Patience, patience, we shall soon be off!"

May 22nd.—"It is a week now," said my master, "since *Bel Ami* was published; there is a large demand from the provinces, and the press is favourable. Did I not tell you so, hey?" and he laughed under his heavy moustache.

CHAPTER IV

MAY 1885-JUNE 1886

Étretat—The Barbary ducks—The crowing of a cock—Successful firing—Puff—Excessive heat—Walks—The shooting season begins—*Salammbô*—Departure from Étretat—Sojourn in Paris—Arrival at Antibes—The Villa Muterse—January 1886—The olive harvest—Madame de Maupassant—The *Louisette*—The *Bel Ami*—We return to Paris in the Rue Montchanin—We regret the Southern sun—*Mademoiselle Perle* and *les Sœurs Rondoli*—A walk in the Parc Monceau—The graceful reader.

ETRETAT, *end of May 1885*.—When we arrived at Étretat everything was already very much advanced; the trees were covered with leaves, the rosebuds were just coming out, the strawberry plants were showing their little white flowers, their roots being excessively damp for the nonce. One morning two blue Barbary ducks were brought from Madame Valois' house. My master immediately came out to put them himself into the pond, and they readily began to swim, plunged three or four times and shook themselves, flapping their wings. They seemed perfectly happy, as if they thought that small pond had been devised especially for them. My master gave the porter some money and went in, convinced the ducks were not trying to escape, and that they soon would be quite accustomed to their new quarters. After lunch I

brought them a quantity of food, and my master came to look at the feast.

"They *are* handsome!" cried he, "such pretty plumage! You must always give them more than they want, otherwise they would eat the bread I give the fish."

Piroli never left her master, but at the sight of the ducks she hid herself among the spindle-trees surrounding the pond, waving her tail about, rolling her large eyes, and doubtless asking herself whence came these strange animals she had never seen before; however, she soon became accustomed to them, and wanted to play with the little ducks; as they fled at her approach, she became exceedingly plucky, and made a few attempts to reach them, but she gave up as soon as she found her paws were wet. Then my master spoke to her:—

"I hope, Miss Piroli," said he, "you are not going to take those tiny ducks for large birds and fight them! Mind you don't, for I shall be angry!"

Then he took her into his arms, and in a few days she understood those small blue balls formed part of the household. As we were going in we saw a tall woman coming up the avenue.

"Now, that is Marie Seize," exclaimed my master; "she saw the shutters were open, and she has lost no time. . . . Never mind!" added he with a deep sigh. And Marie Seize got what she wanted.

The hens are as handsome as last year; the cock is not so imposing as his predecessor, but he makes up for it by crowing lustily.

"That cock is simply terrifying," said my master one day; "he crows, and is gifted with a most powerful voice, but I am sure you do not know how often a good cock crows when he wakes up."

I confessed my ignorance.

"Well," said he, "when he first crows he gives forth a series of from thirty-four to thirty-five calls; the second time seventeen; the third time and so forth it becomes irregular."

Often, when recalling my master's remarks, I noticed our cock gave exactly the series of crows he had indicated; it was a good cock.

June 2nd.—My master told me to carry his pistols to the shooting gallery, he got there before me and shot twenty times at two targets. I counted fifteen hits, and five bullets in the bull's eye. When I said: "Now, that's brilliant shooting!" "Yes, pretty good, if you like." And laughing he added:

"But we can't always be brilliant! You know my friend M. E.—, he is but forty years of age, he is as strong as a hunter, well, lately, he was not at all brilliant with Madame X.—! But I have shot long enough for to-day; I must go and get the bowls ready, the ladies will soon be here."

A few days afterwards, my master was shooting, when he called me. I hurried up with some bullets, thinking he wanted them.

"That is not what I called you for," says he. "See, I can't get this rod out of the pistol, it sticks so hard! Each of us will take one of the two ends, and we'll have a tug-of-war!"

And several times my master sent me flying, for each of us tried as hard as he could. After many efforts we succeeded ; but our hands were heated and seemed as if they had a sort of St Vitus's dance."

As he was re-loading his pistol : " Wait, François," he said, " I will shew you that my hand does not shake, even after all these trials of strength."

And he held his pistol at arm's length.

" You can see the first leaf of a small isolated branch on the right of that tree ? I am going to cut it off just at the point where it joins on to the branch."

One shot, and the tiny leaf turning a somersault in the air, fell down on the grass and took up its position as a dead leaf.

We measured the distance ; twenty-eight paces, and my master said :

" I could go on shooting ten leaves off like that . . ."

Suddenly we heard voices.

" Those are the ladies," said he ; " now pick everything up, and please pass some sandpaper over that ramrod."

Étretat, end of June.—My master has bought a retriever, it is well broken in, and has just arrived. The pretty creature immediately took to its master who in the morning went to fetch it at the kennel. It only left him at meal time. My master was delighted with his dog, a superb Pont-Audemer spaniel, with a pretty mask and most intelligent eyes. Speech alone was wanting. He was so well trained that he did not even run after the hens. My master loved him dearly.

"I think," said he to me, "that pretty Paff will be a jolly help to me when I shoot."

During the summer the keeper came to fetch Paff and brought him to M. Martin's farm, making him reconnoitre the shooting-ground.

July.—M. de Maupassant has been amusing himself with fireworks; but this year the heat had dried everything up, even the sea-bents on the coast; their green hue had turned into a tarnished mahogany colour; half-dead and their heads bowed down, they were quite ready to blaze up, and that is exactly what happened. Many people who were present ran about to stamp the fire out, that was neither prudent or practical. I took a strong mat thoroughly wetted, and I soon extinguished the bents, pressing them down with this very simple contrivance. As I returned to the garden I heard Dr Pouchet saying to my master:

"Well, your François has got his wits about him."

"Yes," replied my master, "he's full of resources. He's never at a loss what to do, not only about a fire, but about anything else."

August.—La Guillette is entirely filled with guests. The heat is increasing; it is not only the strawberry bed that wants constant watering, but all the shrubs, if we wish to keep them alive. So every morning, very early, the gardener, his wife, I, and even my master (who considers it quite an amusement), water the garden properly before the sun rises, and thus all is green, and the flowers keep fresh.

In the afternoon my master is always occupied

with his guests. One day he will take them to the Casino, another to the cliffs to see the "Man Hole," the Needle, and the "Ladies' Chamber." They return by the Valois wood so as to enjoy a cool walk ; they also visit the " Mossy Fountain " by the " Priest's Staircase."

The shooting season begins this year a fortnight earlier than usual. My master is not sorry for it, he wants to try his new gun ; he has made all his cartridges himself, so as to be sure, says he, of the quantity of powder that is used, and thus obtain perfect regularity in shooting.

On the opening day six friends are to join him at nine in the morning so as to take a turn before lunch at twelve. My master came to see me making an omelet on a wood fire in the large fireplace, decked out with all the necessary kitchen utensils. Everyone of them is of wrought iron and shines like silver.

My master said to me in a low voice :—

" It is a pleasure to see such a handsome fireplace, so well fitted up, and so well kept."

Then all sat down and I brought the omelette, stuffed with mushrooms, with golden-brown truffles delicately seasoned, and tossed up in excellent fresh butter. They said it was exquisite, and stated that a wood-fire is, after all, the best for cooking things that should be done quickly.

At one o'clock the sportsmen took to the plain. It is hot, the little quails are lazy, so are the partridges, a hundred and forty-three birds are brought down. Really a splendid result for a small piece of

ground. My master stood at the head of the list with thirty-seven birds, M. Arraux with twenty-three. Master, much pleased, attributes his success to his gun, to young Paff who behaved beautifully, also to the composition of his cartridges, which he intends to continue making himself.

One day the driver forgot to fetch us. It was hotter than before. When my master saw the sun about to set, he decided on walking back to Étretat ! He gave me his gun to carry. We started at a good pace, and in five-and-twenty minutes we had accomplished a march of four miles !

" See, François," said my master delightedly, " if a general could get his men to march like that, it would often be the way to win an unexpected victory ! "

Yes, but we were as damp as if we had come out of a bath, and I hardly think the poor soldiers could stand such a strain !

When the autumn came on, my master went after rabbits with his small beagles, which are really quite remarkable for their endurance and good hunting qualities. I pitied them, their short comical legs did not seem made for such fatiguing exercise.

One evening there was rain and a raging storm ; M. de Maupassant remained alone the whole evening. Going up to bed he went through the kitchen, and caught sight of the book *Salammbô* on the table.

" You have finished it ? " asked he.

" Yes sir, it is a beautiful work ; but to understand it thoroughly I ought to read it over several times."

"I am pleased that you should speak so frankly," said my master "for I know it can't be otherwise, that volume represents the work for fifteen years of the finest, doubtless the cleverest brain of our century."

My left hand was on another book. "Hullo!" said my master, "What have you there?"

I took my hand off and let him see the title: *Pope Honorius the Great's Grimoire*.

"I don't dabble in occult science, sir," replied I, "and I don't think any of the tricks described in this book could be executed, still I like to look at it occasionally, because 'tis the volume in which my father taught me to read."

"It's a beautiful edition, François: I have never occupied myself with that science, but I know some men who did, and who were not fools."

Antibes, 1885-1886.—We left Étretat on November the 25th, and after staying ten weeks in Paris, time enough to allow my master to settle his business with his publisher, on Christmas Eve we came into possession of the villa Mutterse at Cap d'Antibes. On one side this old house has the appearance of a long wall; there is no break either of windows or doors; the front looks southwards, and opens on to a large yard hedged round with beautiful clumps of trees. You see the fields, the vineyards beyond which are olive groves, and further still, a tall white lighthouse at the point of the Cape.

The winter was mild. Every day after breakfast my master came out and sat with his mother on a

bench before the drawing-room full in the sun, and well sheltered from the cold north wind which sometimes came down from the Alps all covered with snow ; they are apparently far away when it is fine, and quite close on the rare days when their summits seem to hold the clouds up.

My master was so happy alone on that bench with his mother ! They discuss freely the scheme of some new tale ; the plot is altered, at last they are both of the same opinion.

"That's perfect," exclaims my master with a laugh, "my tale now falls on its feet like the porter's cat."

This cat was always playing endless games on the bench with my master ; and the little thing, which seemed so sad when we arrived, soon understood it had now found a comrade and a friend. Now it never missed coming to this spot at the appointed time. It was a pretty creature with its thick grey and white fur, it had a small head, and really intelligent shining yellow eyes ! It gave my master the idea of writing his essay on cats.

Every morning he enjoyed walking along an avenue on the right of the house, bordered by enormous laurels of various species, pepper plants and fine palm trees. At the end stood the conservatory, then a plantation of olive-trees, many of them a hundred years old and with forked stems ; both parts growing well though they took their sap from the same trunk ; very long branches start from the tops as if they wanted to spring still higher up towards the sky.

My master liked walking beneath these trees ; he spent several mornings there, interested by the olive-harvest. Women dressed in men's clothes were perched on the branches. Armed with sticks they struck vigorously about them, and the fruit fell noiselessly on the green turf. Others picked it up, putting it first in baskets and then in sacks. My master, who was a great observer, followed the details of these operations most attentively. Often, he was not satisfied with spending the morning there as a looker-on, but would return to the scene in the afternoon. As soon as he had finished his game with the cat, he took the path under the olive-trees where the women were at work, his grey hat pulled down over his eyes, and holding his stout alpenstock. Then he made as if walking very quickly, but with short steps, and managed to pass quite close to the women picking up the olives. In the evening, during dinner, he told his mother how pleased he was to have examined all the details of this harvest, which he intended to make use of later on.

" For really," added he, " besides its comical aspect, there is also a good deal of poetry about it all."

Madame de Maupassant then told her son of one of her journeys in the wilds of Corsica, where she had beheld this same kind of work performed by beings even stranger than these.

" They wore," said she, " costumes that I really cannot describe, but which, I assure you, would have frightened any one but me ! If you beheld the sight, you would find more than poetry, you would

feel the most startling sensations. In that country some of the olive-trees are of monstrous size, their trunks bend down so as to touch the ground, follow it for yards, and then start upwards again like young trees."

At this place I must tell that Madame de Maupassant did not know fear. She had journeyed alone, on foot, with her alpenstock, throughout Italy in every direction, penetrating into the remotest corners. She explored also part of the Two-Sicilies, then Corsica which she liked particularly, finding there impressions which suited her turn of mind, wild landscapes of primitive beauty, then "the rocks mingling with the sea in a most unusual manner," she would say, "forming quite an unforgettable sight." Every day Madame would talk of bandits and vendettas, always with her peculiar enthusiasm, describing for her son the things she had seen, using literary language, and her expressions, when she gave an account of all she had witnessed, reminded me very much of Flaubert's style.

Often when in the evening my master was away, she would describe to me and to Marie her maid the fantastic scenes she had beheld during her two years' stay in Corsica. Sometimes she told us these extraordinary adventures, frequently so mysterious, with such impetuosity that cold shudders used to run down my back. She confessed to us she had never tasted anything so delicious as the small and delicate field-fares which the banditti gave her for breakfast, particularly in Bellacoscia's cavern in the thickets.

And Madame would add: "All those men always treated me with every attention and perfect politeness."

Now and then my master takes a trip in his *Louissette* which is moored in the harbour of Aubernon (bay of the Salice). This boat being only of use for short excursions, he bought the *Bel Ami*, so as to be able to take lengthy trips along the coasts. This boat goes easily in and out of the harbours, which suits my master. Now he does not remain long on the bench; as soon as lunch is over he goes to see his *Bel Ami* at Antibes. M. Mutterse, an ex-naval captain, often accompanied him on his new boat; they afterwards became fast friends, holding each other in great esteem. It was M. Mutterse who found Bernard for my master, a capital sailor, prudent, handy, supple, well-mannered, just the fellow for pleasure-trips.

After going out several times my master soon acquired the necessary knowledge for handling his boat. He used to entertain at lunch people belonging to Cannes society; the afternoon was given up to sailing on the *Bel-Ami*. Once he even went as far as Nice.

One day I had taken the plaids on board, and stood on the jetty contemplating the yacht carrying a whole party out to sea, when the breeze blew out her sails. It was rather a pretty sight, she cut well through the water, but the black paint of the hull though picked out by a yellow circle that looked like a golden girdle, was not of a pleasant aspect. Her flat shape was never liked by my master.

Our stay at the Cape was coming to an end. They were over, those beautiful evenings when I wandered about the roads running like so many white ribbons through meadows covered with sweet-smelling thyme, forming a brilliant carpet under the moonlight. The large trunks of the olive-trees threw fantastic shadows across the road, the double effect of the rays of the moon and those of the lighthouse, standing at the point called "la Garousse," caused them to take curious distorted shapes.

One evening my master came in late for dinner. He immediately told me he had hired a *châlet* composed of two pavilions, one facing south, the other north.

"Thus," said he, "the house can be inhabited at any time; Madame will live there entirely, and we can go there whenever I like. It is a very pretty abode, there is a splendid view, the house stands close to the road from Antibes to Cannes, on a little hill called "la Badine."

We stayed a few days longer at Antibes, so as M. Gervex should finish my master's portrait, then we returned to Paris.

Paris, March the 8th, rue Montchanin.—It is cold, the weather is dull, the stove is lighted, the apartment is nice and warm. My master takes his bath, and Piroli, seated next the Jewish lamp, on a little Gothic stand, follows with her eyes all my master's motions, provoked at seeing him where she can't get at him for her usual game of play.

M. de Maupassant is correcting the first proofs of

his new novel *Mont-Oriol*. While returning from a visit paid to his publisher, he bought a splendid white bearskin which covered half the drawing-room floor. It looked well and somewhat cheered up the room which, with its northern aspect, seemed so monotonous and so dull after our stay in the South.

Doctor X—— was then my master's medical man; he ordered him vapour baths. In a room downstairs we placed a large rush-bottomed arm-chair with blankets, the whole was covered up by a huge waterproof. The treatment did my master a great deal of good, he took his shower-bath after his vapour-bath, which gave him a tremendous reaction. He was quite satisfied.

For people literally imbued as we were with the good southern sun we had just left behind us, this flat my master had furnished so well seemed somehow too confined, too hot and airless. The bedroom, only about nine feet long, all hung with stuffs and tapestry, was very badly lighted, and the air was only renewed through the next room. My master slept badly in this molehill. Once I was bold enough to tell him we should be much better off on a fifth floor with a large balcony, but I had no success. He was quite wedded, for the time being, to the ground floor.

There was another nuisance: dogs in a neighbouring courtyard barked all night long, which is awfully provoking to light sleepers. I enquired whether there was no possibility of altering this state of things, but I learnt that the nearest neighbour of these noisy dogs had taken action against their owner, and that

all he had obtained from the court was an order to pay the costs.

M. de Maupassant has at last turned the conservatory into his study ; the light coming from the illuminated ceiling above tires his eyes much less, and there are no street noises to speak of. The Louis Seize table (decorated with brass ornaments) is laden with manuscripts and writing-paper ; one can see the titles of two tales : *Mademoiselle Perle* and *Les Sœurs Rondoli*. On the first page of a novel not yet baptized can be read a series of names, differently spelt, and written in large Gothic letters. He worked at all these at the same time, besides the two weekly articles for newspapers.

One day I ventured to tell my master that so much work carried on at once must tire his brain.

"No indeed," said he, "I am in such good training ! When I am tired of one thing I take another up as a rest. Still, I intend henceforth to suppress politics, which bore me. Here is my last article, you will be kind enough to take it to the *Figaro* this afternoon. I'll go there one of these days, so that they may know they must not expect any more of those articles I used to give them."

My master said to me the morning after a splendid day in May :—

"Yesterday I called on Count Cernuschi ; his house in the Parc Monceau is a beautiful place. The interior is not in the least like an ordinary dwelling-house, it is a real museum. There is some interesting china, but what is most curious is his drawing-room,



BISKRA, OCT., 1890. NATIVE WOMAN CARRYING BABY



about 35 feet high, and of course very large. It contains a collection of superb Japanese bronzes, a Mejouro Buddha mounted under a dais, the whole about 22 feet high, then a perfume-burner from Kioto ; another, most artistic, and representing a dragon ; he has also a Chinese and a Japanese war-god, both with most comical accoutrements (without mentioning their odd faces with pointed beards). He certainly possesses articles of the greatest value. When I left M. de Cernuschi I intended to take the Friedland Avenue ; I might have chosen the central alley in the park, or else that of the nursemaids on the left, it was my shortest way, but I do not know why, I went to the right, choosing the path following the Boulevard de Courcelles. I passed by the duck-pond where there are two miserable white swans. Shortly afterwards I observed a lady seated alone reading a book which seemed to absorb her completely. I went on a few steps and sat down for an instant admiring the grace of the lady who attended to nothing but her book. Then I went to sit in the sun. There, on a bench near mine, I saw a couple, middle-aged ; the wife was crocheting, the husband was asleep, his face was red ; evidently a case of blood to the head and a bad digestion. I felt so comfortable there ; the sun stealing through the branches just struck me on the legs, the beautiful fresh green soothed my eyes ; I heard the tree bursting into leaf above my head, making a clatter similar to that of large rain-drops when they fall on green leaves.

"That park is a delicious spot at this season. I spent a most agreeable time there, I was dreaming away just as if influenced by those sweet oriental perfumes which come from the Gods and send you into most extraordinary fantasies. . . . I was taken from my dreams by the noise made by three gardeners who were coming to plant a superb shrub, a musaceum. I enjoyed being present at the operation; the gardeners were most careful in handling the plant, they touched it most gently; when it was in its place I got up to admire it. It was a lovely specimen! I left the park, still charmed with the quiet rest I had found there, and with the satisfaction I felt while admiring that beautiful plant."

It is exactly where this plant which so pleased my master was, that a monument has been erected to his memory! It is the companion to Musset's willow!

CHAPTER V

OCTOBER 1886—MAY 1887

At the Alp chalet—The frame of a new novel—Picturesque walks—René Maizeroy and Aurélien Scholl—Princely and fashionable visits—An earthquake—The house falls to pieces—Piroli is delighted to return to Paris—A candid marquise.

ANTIBES, *the Alp Chalet, October 2nd.*—My master is walking to and fro in his study on the second floor, I ought to say he goes from one window to another, for this circular room is pierced by five openings. Whichever you choose to look out from, space stretches before you further than you can see. On the northern side you first behold the tops of the hills covered with pines and groups of houses, while farm villages cling to their slopes. All these dwellings are painted pink and white; the effect is both picturesque and charming.

Then the chain of the Alps spreads out to the frontier; Italy, Nice, the Promenade des Anglais, the whole of the splendid Golfe des Anges are visible; a black line edges the Gulf; it is the railway. Nearer, there is a fort in the shape of a star starting from the sea; Antibes with its two square towers and the ramparts of Vauban; the slopes, the manœuvring-ground so grey, near which a square of dark green

spreads out. This is the Antibes cemetery shaded by tall cypresses, and mirrored in the waters of the small cove surrounding the harbour. A graveyard in that bay, close to the sea which is so blue, seems to have been placed there in order that the departed may be lulled by the waves.

Through the windows towards the north there is the Cape with its enormous mass of silvery verdure. The Golfe Juan and the Islands of Lerins strike the eye towards the right. It is in this matchless scene that my master is laying the plan of a novel on which he sets a great value. May those marvellous sites, that splendid panorama, those natural beauties that charm the sight and touch the heart, help and inspire him in the work he is about to conceive ! Such is the wish I formed when with him I had gazed at the magnificent country that surrounded us, and placed us in marvellous surroundings, surely designed for those who required a restful retreat !

The heat is still very great during the day, but the evenings are delicious ; the sky crowded with stars is splendidly clear. I regret that the Étretat astronomer should be so far from us, for I think he would be delighted to behold this diamond-studded vault which we admire every evening.

Piroli is here, hunting after crickets and coming occasionally to a dead point before the glow-worms, which are so numerous that they frighten her.

When the time to sleep comes, we are loth to leave the garden, which is so enjoyable ; the nights are so mild they make you think of the earthly paradise

mentioned in the Bible. I sleep with my window open, the warm breeze that comes in smells so delightfully. Sleep is restful and wholesome under its influence.

The winter visitors are not yet here. M. de Maupassant plans his own day; he rises at eight, takes the air in the garden under the pepper-trees of which the light branches bend towards the ground like the weeping willow. Those trees with their lead-coloured leaves which turn silvery where the wind whips them, look gay all the winter. My master keeps at work till eleven, takes his shower-bath and lunches at twelve; towards two he goes for a walk, often in the woods at the right of Vallauris which stretch out very far over the mountains.

One day he lost himself in these woods where the ravines constitute the only roads; it was half-past nine in the evening when he came home; we were all exceedingly anxious. He told us the details of his wanderings, describing the gigantic trees he had seen on the rocks in almost inaccessible places.

"Without my compass," added he, "I can't say when I should have got out of that wood. I really was lost!"

Thrice a week he used to fence in the house with a sergeant; though not a good fencer, the exercise amused him. He did his best!

End of October.—He has his boat fitted out and takes a second sailor on board, a powerful fellow called Raymond, Bernard's brother-in-law. They go out in the *Bel Ami*, as far as Cannes and St Raphaël;

my master comes home delighted with his sail. M. Maizeroy came to spend a few days at the house, also M. Aurélien Scholl, for a longer time.

November.—My master leaves us once a week for twenty-four hours, from the Thursday till Friday at noon. With the exception of this outing, he spends his time in his study or on his yacht. The top of the mast of the *Bel-Ami* can easily be seen from the study. Thus it is settled that when Bernard thinks it will be fine, he is to haul the flag up at nine in the morning, so that before eleven my master will know whether or not he can go for a sail in the afternoon.

My master has often invited his mother to come for an excursion on his boat, which now behaves very well, but Madame declines with thanks, saying she prefers walking, which is so good for her health.

"Presently," says she, "I will pay a visit to Mme. King, at the château of La Pinède; then I shall push on to the end of the Cape. If you are anywhere about in that direction I shall see you; on account of the shape of the sails, I could pick your boat out amid a hundred."

My master has given several luncheon parties to the Princes now staying at Cannes, and all say the view of the Alps from this place is infinitely more beautiful than from any other point of the coast, which pleases him greatly. He therefore thanks them profusely, with many polite speeches to the great ladies; so much so that I ask myself sometimes if he is not going a little too far. Those who know

him as well as I do can detect occasionally a slight irony scarcely concealed beneath his compliments.

The day after these luncheons, M. de Maupassant, unlike himself when with us, used to become exceedingly talkative. Here are some of his remarks :

"These fashionable ladies don't please me ; they have some wit, true, but it is wit set in a mould, like a rice-pudding with cream. Their wit comes from their education at the *Sacré Cœur*, always the same sentences, composed of the same words. That's the rice. Then all the small-talk society has furnished them with. That's the cream ! And they continually put the same dish before you. You know how fond I am of rice, still I absolutely decline to eat it every day."

"I cannot compare women of the world to artistic women living in an intellectual set. These delight you, because all they say is unexpected. Their chatter does not suddenly stop short ; they can talk to you about picture-galleries, theatres, music, mountains, towns ; it is all said in a way that bewitches you to such a degree that one often loses all idea of time. One would willingly remain resting on the cushions of the divan, dreaming of being carried off to fairyland. . . ."

When my master had done descanting on the ladies, he praised the way the flowers on the table were arranged.

"Where do you find them all ? I don't see any about."

I replied that if sought after carefully, there were a few to be found.

We were nearing the anniversary of Sainte Colette, always celebrated in the family. The winter hardly exists on this coast, it had already vanished before the advent of spring, which had beautified the garden. This sunny region, said to be the loveliest in the world, desired apparently to maintain its reputation.

This morning, at half-past five, all the bells in the house rang furiously, all the wood-work of the northern part of the chalet began to twist itself with a frightful noise, as if the house was coming down.

I sprang out of bed, and reached the staircase without understanding what was happening. Then I heard my master shouting with the whole strength of his lungs: "Hurry! hurry out! it's an earthquake!" But the first shock was already over.

"Let us make haste to dress," said my master, "and go down into the garden, for the counter-stroke is sure to come in a few minutes." We reached the garden, M. de Maupassant stamped impatiently on the ground, because neither Madame nor her maid had run downstairs. Then came the second stroke, and at last Madame appeared.

"Now, my dear boy," said she, "when this kind of thing happens, think of yourself, but not of me, I pray you, for I can't hurry, and you know any earthquake leaves me perfectly indifferent."

We then went into the gardener's dwelling, which only consists of the ground-floor. My master thought it more prudent, expecting other shocks. I kindled

the fire, and prepared breakfast. When our milk-maid appeared, she was still frightened to death, and sobbed out :

" Yes, I was climbing the Badine hill, when suddenly I lost my balance and was about to fall backwards ; instinctively I threw myself forward. But my milk-pans, which I carried on my head, had been thrown down, quite a long way off." Here she wiped the tears from her eyes. " I can't give you any milk this morning," added she, " on account of that horrid earthquake."

After drinking the tea we returned courageously to the chalet, though large cracks were visible everywhere. We decided on leaving all the doors open, so as to be ready to go out the instant we felt the slightest movement under our feet.

About eight my master was ready to take his shower-bath. There was another violent shock, but we were not disturbed, being already accustomed to that sort of surprise. On the whole, we had not suffered, and few things were broken in the house. It was not so in the neighbouring villa ; the ceilings had fallen down, and caused a good deal of damage. Happily, no one was hurt.

My master went in the afternoon to the telegraph office, and heard about the awful disaster at Nice. A good deal of harm had been done at Antibes, particularly in the old streets, but only one person had been killed, and few were wounded.

My master told us in the evening, that, according to the indications given by the Nice observatory,

one might expect more shocks, but not such violent ones. This was not a great inducement to go to bed ! Madame declared that she was on no account to be disturbed, as she certainly would not come downstairs for any earthquakes !

A week went by, during which we heard about all the misfortunes that had happened in Italy ; one day, when my master was at Nice, he called at the Meteorological office, where they had registered seventeen shocks since the first day of the earthquake, and he was told there would be more.

When he came home he sent for M. Mary, who was a master-builder at Antibes. This man examined the house, and said it would be the height of imprudence to continue living in the two-storied part, as there were long cracks extending from the cellars to the garrets, the floors were now separated from the walls, and felt like spring-boards as you walked on them.

My master was thus obliged to leave his study ; he established himself in a gallery covered with glass, just above the hall where he used to fence. I slept for six weeks on a mattress placed on the floor of this lobby, which was about fifteen yards long ; the door remained open night and day all this time, I had only hung up a blind so as the night air should not strike my eyes. . . .

Custom is everything ; we had no fear ; my master, who generally bolted even his room door, now slept as it were in the open air, none of the outlets of the house were closed, they all gave on to the high road, pervaded night and day by all the rascals sent out

of Italy towards the coast, and marching on to Toulon and Marseilles. I must confess that not one of them was even rude to us ; it is true that when the same tramp came begging four times in the same day, I made as if I did not know him again, and bestowed another mite on him, without making any remark.

Sometimes in the evening my master and I would walk to the end of the garden, whence one could see Nice and the long row of gas lamps on the Promenade des Anglais ; the conversation always returned to the earthquake ; my master described it so as to make me shudder, and frightened me to death for the whole night.

One evening we remarked that on the Antibes fortifications the watch-fires were much more numerous than before ; about two hundred families camped out there, having had to quit their dwellings which were tumbling down after all these shocks. My master went one evening to see them ; he was most generous towards those who were really in want. It was a melancholy and miserable sight ; here a mother and her four children slept on two straw mattresses joined together. Next them lay a whole family from the grandmother to the babies ; here and there, stoves, night lights, Jewish lamps hung on wooden posts. It was a lugubrious sight, but luckily the weather was not cold.

I am surprised my master did not write an article on all this wretchedness, his pen would have described it so graphically. He would only have had to transcribe the account he gave his mother the next day.

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The End of March.—Our house is still standing ; but the cracks get broader and broader, particularly above the door and windows.

To forget our trials, I sometimes go and pick violets in the field with the neighbours. We are often fifteen and it is great fun ; everyone cracks his jokes ; but we do not linger by the way, as there is no time to lose. Each of us has his basket and his two rows, and his pride is in being the first to finish the job. My master often passes by, and looks as if he would like to imitate us. . . .

Everything is blossoming in the garden, a small arbutus is already covered with its ripe fruit, red as any strawberry.

At the end of April we left the chalet, where we had stood seventy-two shocks. My master has given his orders ; the masons will succeed us.

When we reached the flat, we found it comfortably warmed. Piroli recognizes her dwelling. She is particularly happy to find her beaded blind, and the bearskin with its peculiar scent. She is always trying to examine it ; she scratches the fur the wrong way, applies her nose to it and sniffs at it for a long time, probably with the hope of finding out what kind of beast this enormous animal can be. She seems satisfied, and has taken up all her old habits. It is not the same with my master ; he appears tired already and does not conceal it ; he sees too many people, and above all, receives too many invitations. They will not leave him alone.

He was out one afternoon when a small yellow

dog-cart stopped before the house. A young lady dressed in a pretty tailor-made costume of grey, with a hat of the same colour, jumped down. I opened the door, and she asked me sharply if M. de Maupassant was at home.

"No," said I, "my master is out."

"Well," she replied, "I am coming in, give me some writing materials."

And on a sheet of foolscap she found on the bureau she wrote one word in large letters filling the page :

"PIG !"

When my master came in he saw the sheet, read it and burst out laughing.

"The devil take them all !" exclaimed he suddenly, adding :

"The young marquise who writes so well is the daughter of a former minister of the Second Empire. But I will not see her. . . . I am dead tired of her. . . . I'll tell you at once, François, I will not stay any longer in Paris ; here they don't give me time to breathe ; it's really wearisome . . . so I'll just rent a place at Chatou. . . ."

CHAPTER VI

MAY-JUNE 1887

Chatou—Exotic decoration—Mme. O——'s frogs—The Countesses at dinner—Some painful truths and agreeable feminine philosophy—Piroli's maternal instinct—Pleasant ending to a tragedy—Unexpected camping out—Ahoy! boatmen!—An unlucky illness—The millionaire's proposition.

MY master told me he had heard of a pretty flat at Chatou between the two arms of the Seine, close to the bridge.

"We will spend six weeks there," said he, "before starting for Étretat. I hope I shall be less persecuted by people than I am here; also I shall be able to move about and stretch my arms out."

We reached the flat three days later. In a sort of a turret behind the drawing-room there is a tiny place that can do duty as a study.

"I shall work," says my master, "in that room, which looks out on the running water. To-morrow I shall go to Paris and bring back what is wanted to decorate those walls, which are too bare; and make the place gay and bright; you'll see! . . ."

Next morning he returned with cases, and began to nail on to the angular walls of the little room Chinese and Japanese figures with parasols, Hottentot women holding each other's hands and making grimaces.

There were also fish with strange heads, silver eyes, and moustaches of golden thread. He tried to glue them on to the wall, occasionally upside down, with their tails sticking up, or horizontally, so as to judge which was the best way. Then he blocked a window up, the shutters were closed as well as the curtains, one window being sufficient to give light. Even the blind of this second window was pulled down so as to soften the light and the brilliant reflection of the water, as the May sun already shone powerfully. It was getting rather late, when I asked my master if I could prepare lunch.

All this decoration took us several days. When everything was finished my master sat down before his table and tried to write ; but the light came from the side, and he could not stand it ; we had to bring all the writing materials back to the drawing-room table.

One morning, as I came in, I found him at the window.

" Now," he said, " look at the bank on the other side, how melancholy it looks when the water is low ! That mud gives it the aspect of a frog-pond without rushes ; and those dirty white houses are really ugly. It is true they are but fishermen's dwellings. . . . Look here, I should like to settle with one of those fishermen to procure me a hundred and fifty live frogs. I'll pay him ten francs."

It was soon done ; next morning the fisherman brought the frogs, but there were only a hundred and ten. As soon as the man had departed, my master called me.

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MADAME O—S PRCE

"me this basket, ordering me to ~~bring it~~
own hands, you alone can ~~bring it~~
contents!"

"Ah! Ah!" exclaimed ~~her~~
loudly that her voice rang through the hall as
she attempted to speak it was all over.

"Francois, you are going to see me in the
that basket contains."

I tried to hold my own against the master's express wish. I tried to keep the secret of the master.

But I could say no more. I - ~~ended~~ it - ~~me~~

"Francis, I am waiting in the car,"
she in a soft voice. "I will be there in a moment."
there was no answering from the apartment.

Stammes, der der Welt in der
her.

"Well," said she, "what can we do?"

"I really do not know ~~him~~

"Still, they ~~must~~ ~~can~~ ~~be~~ ~~made~~ ~~in~~
way?"

"Yes, Madam. It is a small matter, but the legs of a woman who has been in the army for some time are not so supple as those of a young girl."

"Ah! my well that is the interesting part."

And she travels with ~~anger~~.

"Wird von Herrn J. de Lathauwer

you go downstairs, François, tell one of the footmen to have the horses immediately put to ; I will carry the poor little frogs to the Bois de Boulogne, they must be awfully thirsty."

When I got home I informed my master of my defeat ; he wanted to hear all the details, and laughed heartily.

" I knew how it would all end ; I knew she would have but one thought : how to save their lives ! "

One evening my master informed me he would give a dinner-party on June the 2nd.

" We shall be twelve at table," said he, " if none of the ladies fail me ; and there will only be three men."

He paused.

" Yes, I have invited nine ladies," added he ; " what is most amusing is that they are nearly all countesses," and he counted them on his fingers : " Quite so ; excepting Madame Z—— and little Nina, each of them bears a countess's coronet. All these ladies will much amuse my friend L——, who, while giving them their titles with tremendous emphasis, will make fun at their expense. Still, I hope he won't go beyond the limits of good taste."

As soon as people had sat down to table, M. L—— asked these ladies what they had done with their husbands, and just as if he was repeating the Litany, he began to tell each of them where her spouse was, how occupied, his thoughts, and about the delight he was enjoying in his favorite haunts. Everything said by this terrible M. L—— seemed so true that



A CORNER IN BISKRA

he might have been taken for a wizard or else have been suspected of often accompanying the absentees into the houses he described so graphically.

These speeches might seem rather rude ; but the noble ladies apparently did not mind, for all began to proclaim their indifference about the details he had just given them, and which they had long been familiar with. They added that their husbands preferred tainted meat in some of the restaurants to good fresh roast beef in their own houses.

"Don't be anxious on that subject," they concluded, "you good-looking fellow with dark brown hair. We have not awaited your revelations before making good use of the liberal gifts of Heaven to us, and having as much fun as we could manage to get. . . . We leave our husbands to their own preferences. . . ."

I did not hear the wizard's reply, as I had to go to the pantry and fetch the other dishes . . . also Piroli was constantly rubbing herself against my legs, and mewling, inviting me to go and see her kittens, born that afternoon.

In the evening, when everyone was gone, Piroli went and complained to my master.

"The poor little thing is whimpering so much," said he, "that something unusual must have happened."

We followed her to the tiny study decorated with Chinese figures, now the dwelling of Piroli and her children. . . . One of the kittens was dead, and she had pulled it out of the basket.

"So that is why you are so miserable, my little pet!" said my master.

While he was comforting her I took the little body away, and Piroli immediately returned to her place in the basket with the remainder of her offspring.

"Really," said my master, "speech is the only thing she lacks."

Then I told him that I had taught her in two or three days how to go down morning and evening to the banks of the Seine, where she found refreshing herbs and sometimes the grasshoppers, which she loved to eat. . . .

One day, after breakfast, M. de Maupassant said to me :

"I am going to take a turn in the island ; should people ask to see me, say I am gone to Paris."

M. L—— came towards three.

"Is your master at home?"

"No, sir ; he is taking a walk in the island."

"Well, I have just come from Paris, and have travelled with Madame N—— who does not know me. She is in a frightfully excited state ; several times she drew a revolver out of her pocket, and the object of her anger is M. de Maupassant. There is no doubt about her intentions ; I am going to find your master and warn him. Do you wait for the lady, and do your best to persuade her to return to Paris."

In less than a quarter of an hour this person appeared.

"François," says she, very calmly, "is M. de Maupassant at home?"

"No, Madame; my master is in Paris."

"No, no," she exclaimed loudly. "I intend to . . ."

She stopped suddenly, turned pale, and was swaying backward when I seized her in my arms (she might have hurt herself considerably by a fall). I carried her on to the cane sofa in the dining-room. As soon as she was flat on her back I rubbed her hands, bathed her temples with cold water and vinegar; it was all of no use. Then I took the salts bottles, thrusting them occasionally up her nostrils. Still, she did not come to; she did not seem to breathe; she was so pale I began to ask myself if she was not dead.

I got really frightened; I threw the window open so as to get some air, and I was about to cry out for assistance, when I remembered that in these cases it is advisable to loosen a fainting woman's dress. I came back to her, and undid her bodice, then tried to lift her head and make her smell the salts.

At last she began to breathe, at first very slightly, then more deeply; her lips moved as if she were thirsty, her eyelids quivered as if about to open, and, slowly inhaling the salts, she came to herself.

When she was better she took my two hands and wept profusely.

"François," said she, between her sobs, "let me see M. de Maupassant; let me see him or I shall die. I must see him; I tell you I must see him! . . . I shall do him no harm, believe me, I promise . . . but let me see him . . ." she cried again.

I quieted her as well as I could, promising to go

immediately and search for my master. . . . I went downstairs, but no one had seen him. I was returning to the lady, when I heard the door open ; it was my master coming home.

"I know," he said directly, "I am coming to settle all that."

He was as calm as if this was quite an everyday matter.

In the evening my master, accompanied by the lady, came to the kitchen door.

"François," said he quite coolly, as if nothing of any importance had happened ; "all is settled now."

"Yes, we are now very good friends," added the lady.

On May the 15th M. de Maupassant informed me he had invited some friends of his youth to dine with him on the following Tuesday.

He impressed on me I was to cook a good dinner.

"You will put the wine on the table, I will pour it out. There will be young and old, bachelors, married people, and even unmarried couples, among the guests. Of course, all these friends will bring their better halves ; they will be here in the afternoon, so as we may have a boating-party. Mind you have a few cakes to offer them before we start for the river."

Then my master threw back his head, passing his hand through his hair.

"I wonder what trick I can find to play on them," said he. "Oh, I know, I will make them miss the last train, that *will* be fun ! . . ."

On the Tuesday everyone came. The dinner-party was exceedingly merry; they all remained long at table; there were so many old recollections to talk about; after coffee there came the liqueurs, the cigars which took up some time. . . . It was a beautiful evening; my master sought me out.

"François," said he, "I am taking all my guests into the island. I shall manage so as to come home too late to catch the last train; anyhow, you must stop all the clocks at a quarter past eleven."

Towards midnight they all came home singing. But they were stupefied when they saw the last train for Paris was gone! Some laughed heartily, and went on singing, but some of the ladies began to scold most ruefully. . . . So as to quiet everybody, champagne was served, and then they reckoned up the number of beds that would be wanted. Mattresses are laid on the ground, they help each other, even the grumblers make up their minds, and jollity reigns again. It was all very quickly done, with much amusement and fun.

The noise made Piroli quite anxious; she came out of the little Japanese study, which she inhabited with her kittens, so as to see what all this row could mean. My master took her in his arms to comfort her; everyone began coaxing her; quite satisfied she purred with delight; all vied in flattering her.

Just then one of the ladies came to say she could only sleep when she was alone. My master told her that he was exactly in the same condition, and that for once they would not even try to sleep. Then

more champagne was served, and master proposed to draw lots for the sleeping accommodation.

This idea excited general laughter.

"If you like," said my master, to pacify his guests, "we will have all the doors open, so as the air may circulate freely."

From the dining-room window one could see the Seine, in which thousands of stars were reflected; one might have thought they were silvered fish on the surface of the water. At last I turned the key on all the bivouacking sleepers, and went to bed.

Chocolate and coffee were ready the next morning before six. Those whom their occupations recalled to Paris, hurried back to town; the lucky ones who had nothing to do but to enjoy existence, remained for lunch at eleven.

In the afternoon, as I was putting a spring-mattress back into its place, my master came to me, rubbing his hands, and caressing Piroli.

"You see, François, all went well; I had told you so, and it was great fun!"

Then there was another series of guests.

"Next week," announced M. de Maupassant, "I shall have a boating-party and keep my friends to dinner; I will let you know in time. . . . Would it not be better to take two of the kittens away, three really must be too much for Piroli. . . . See how thin she is! Here, we will keep that little thing of three colours. I think she will be as pretty as her mother; we will call her Pussy."

Then returning to the drawing-room, he began to

whistle, a rare occurrence with him, for in ten years I only heard him whistle three times. It is the day of the boating party, and I take the orders.

"I am very fit," says my master, showing me his arms, "there is strength there, it is but natural, I have done so much rowing and gone in for physical exercises of every sort! And yet my hands have not developed; they have remained small, but that does not prevent my being strong, and when I hold a thing I hold it firmly.

"And with this chest of mine, I can both breathe freely and bear up against fatigue; which is not the case with all those fancy-boatmen. I am ready to show them what I can do, if they will stand up against me; but I rather doubt it. . . . You will bring the water for my shower-bath at seven; let it be very cold, for certainly I shall be very hot. Give me a light lunch, but let it be strengthening; two boiled eggs, a grilled steak, French beans, Gruyere cheese, and very hot tea."

Just before lunch, my master went to see Alphonse Fournaise, great Admiral of Chatou! Everything was ready, the four boats on one line: *Le Bon Cosaque*; *Monsieur*; *Madame*; and *Bel-Ami*.

Towards two, my master went off, everything he wore was new: white jersey and knickerbockers, and a magnificent white yachting cap. As he was going out he rubbed his hands.

"I have some first-rate tallow just now," said he gaily.

It was more than six when he came in; his face

was distorted, pale, with violet patches ; the sight terrified me.

" Quick, François," said he, " my shower-bath immediately."

I helped him to take off jersey and breeches ; his body had a livid hue. Nevertheless, he took his shower-bath, and I began to rub him with a horse-hair glove and eau-de-Cologne. A minute after, he asked me if the dinner might not be burning. I was so wretched at seeing him in such a state that I could not help exclaiming :

" Once in a way, let the dinner be burnt, what does it matter ! "

He continued the friction for a long time, but he could not obtain the usual reaction. Then he wanted to tell me about the boating-party, but his voice failed him ; he chopped his words, not being able to pronounce them.

Though not silent at dinner, he was not cheerful ; he did not feel well, and on the following day seemed dull ; still, he told me about the boating party.

" My guests," said he, " left me the most to do, but I showed them what a well-trained man can accomplish in that line. We finished up by returning from Marly, M. X . . . on a yawl with a lady, and M. M . . . in the small boat with two ladies ; they chose the dead-water ; I went up the running water in the *Bon-Cosaque* with three ladies on board, and I got to shore before them ! All those fat fellows make me think of the keepers of the Grand Turk's harem. . . ."

After this adventure, my master seemed quite morose for several days ; he would spend hours on his divan, caressing his two cats and only disturbing himself to come to the kitchen and make them drink milk.

During one of these visits he said :

" I will also try some milk to-morrow. I do not feel well ; I have always a pain inside. Please cook me some endives in cream."

In the evening, with the lamp turned down, he combed his cats' fur the wrong way with a tortoise-shell comb he had brought from Italy, and enjoyed seeing the phosphorescent sparks fly up in the dark.

A few days went by in this way, and my master was no better ; he used, however, to take walks in the island, and went to see his boats. But soon sharp intestinal pains came on, all the remedies usually employed in similar cases failed to relieve him. He then resolved to take every quarter-of-an-hour fifteen drops of perchloride of iron in a little water, continuing to apply linseed poultices with laudanum ; and that stopped the pain.

He went to Paris, and consulted a doctor, but he came back dissatisfied ; and complained of the small knowledge of these luminaries of the medical faculty.

One morning, my master coming back from M. Fournaise's house, passed before the kitchen, and asked me to come and give him his shower-bath. I observed he walked with a certain agitation and clenching his hands. I was sure something had

provoked him. His toilet was finished sooner than usual, and he sat down to his lunch.

"What do you think, François?" he exclaimed. "A rich American has offered me a steam yacht! A beauty they say, but he is mistaken about me, and he must have known that he was, for I straight-way refused! I was polite towards his messenger, but what could the millionaire think of me, when he made me this proposal? Was he dreaming or was he *drunk*?"

End of June.—My master feels he gets no better, and resolves to start for Étretat.

"It is too damp for me here," said he, "this place between the two arms of the Seine is never dry! But I love boating, I love the water, wherever I can find it! Unfortunately, it does not suit my health; we will start the day after to-morrow.. I think you must buy a second basket for Pussy; she has grown so much that I fear she will disturb her mother. Then you will take all my belongings off the walls, don't forget the little bureau: make a special case for all those things; we shall take them to Étretat, they will be of use to me there. Now I will tell Alphonse Fournaise to make out my account, and take care of my boats."

CHAPTER VII

JULY-AUGUST 1887

We return to Étretat—Guy de Maupassant studies astronomy in his kitchen—Is reconciled to spinach—The fugitive tortoises—Marie Seize charms tortoises—The revenge . . . let us always think of it!—The *Horla*—Black shadows pass—Influence of the Invisible—*Pierre et Jean* composed in the Ash-tree Avenue—Madame Pasca—Death of Piroli.

JULY 1887.—Here we are back at Étretat. One morning my master hangs up in the kitchen a celestial planisphere, and moving it about, he gives me a description of the heavens, names the principal stars, and distinguishes the planets from the satellites.

"You see," said he, "I can find my way about, and yet I only went once with Camille Flammarion to his observatory. What a delightful man, and how cultivated! His scientific knowledge is very deep and so interesting!"

I then told him Étretat also possessed a most distinguished astronomer, naming M. Louis.

"That is quite true," replied my master, "I have known him since I was a child, I used to meet him at M. L . . .'s. Will you ask him if he will oblige me by coming here one fine evening? I am sure he will not refuse."

M. Louis came and spent many evenings with

my master. Once he took him to cliff of Havre beyond the *Lady's Chamber*. This was the spot this astronomer preferred ; he had the best view of the heavens from it, and penetrated their secrets. For the last thirty years he had watched from that cliff all that went on above, writing to those papers with which he corresponded about any novelty he had discovered. My master told me that M. Louis interested him deeply, and added, " I never should have supposed I was in the neighbourhood of a man gifted with such a mind."

My master came occasionally to move his map of the heavens. I asked myself why he had chosen the kitchen to study astronomy in. Later on, I learnt my presence had something to do with the fancy. One evening coming home with him from some excursion, I had named several stars to him ; the result of very little knowledge, as I only knew those my father had taught me about when I was a little fellow, but this had sufficed to direct master towards that study.

One morning, my master was turning his map about ; this lasted some time and there was not much room. Suddenly, he looked at me.

" Why," said he, " you are making chocolate ? "

" For this evening," replied I.

I had to explain to him that if chocolate is to be good, it must simmer on the fire for twelve hours in company with a vanilla pod.

" Oh ! I've nothing to say," he exclaimed, " I only know that your recipe is excellent."

During July the heat was very great. Paff lies full length in the avenue opposite the kitchen, in the shade of the hedge and the tall wild apple-tree that keeps the well cool. Piroli is between the hedge and Paff, on the edge of the ivy border; she is in a ball and puts her four white velvet paws on her friend's long ear. My master passes by on his way to his tub.

"François" (he is calling me), "have you seen this picture? How graceful these creatures are! But the heat has become so great, it is impossible to keep them in my study, and yet it is very pleasant in there, with the door open towards the north."

Cramoyson has made the new kitchen-garden large enough for plenty of vegetables; I observe some splendid spinach, yet, one day, my master had classed it among the vegetables he never ate. All the same I tried to offer him a dish of it; when he had finished eating, he asked me what those green herbs were. I told him it was an improved plant which came from Tetragonia, so the gardener had told me.

"Never mind the name of the plant," said my master, "thus prepared, it is simply exquisite."

Then he begged Cramoyson always to grow that same vegetable. I told the gardener master had found the spinach delicious, and it was settled between us that the plant had been discovered by Cramoyson, who was exceedingly proud of what he had done.

Our zoological garden is now enriched by the presence of eight fine tortoises. They wander about at will in the *carré normand*. Master was pleased with them, he no longer saw slugs about; sometimes he

amused himself by standing (his feet joined together) on their backs.

"There's solidity for you!" he would say to me. "Even the wheel of a heavily-laden cart would make no impression on that armour that is so resistant."

One day, to our great astonishment, we discovered all the tortoises had disappeared. We sought after them in every corner, and finally found a hole, smaller than the rabbits generally make, under the wire fence. We supposed those creatures which get along so slowly had begun their journey there. Part of the hill and the almost impenetrable underwood of bents and broom were explored, without any success.

A week later, I caught sight of a tall woman coming down the path from the coast. It was Marie Seize, whose habitat was always on the hill called New Caledonia. A few minutes afterwards, I was surprised to see her at the kitchen door with my master. She was holding her apron up. She undid it; there were our eight tortoises inside it; they immediately went back to the meadow and Marie Seize was paid for her trouble. My master never ceased praising the honesty of this poor woman, who might, he said, have made soup of the poor creatures.

Of course the wire fence was carefully examined. Now we were at ease on the subject of the tortoises. But hardly a month had gone by, when again they escaped. In spite of all our care, we never were able to keep them. Several times they played us the same trick, and 'twas always Marie Seize who brought them back. It was a most mysterious occurrence!

What conclusion could one draw? Was she a tortoise-charmer? Or, as said my master, laughing: was the reward rather too generous the first time? It was so tempting. . . .

A few days later, Cramoyson at work near the boat was repairing a border, when my master went up to him, and asked him how he felt. (He had been ill for some days.) He said he was better, but always liable to suffer from those nasty fevers he had caught when a prisoner in Germany. My master then expressed his horror of war, and particularly his hatred of the Prussians.

"Still," said he, "I cannot understand how we French can brag thus about our revenge. We shall never get it in that way; we ought to prepare ourselves without showing it, and fall upon them at a suitable moment!"

I do not exactly recollect the date at which my master told me what follows. I did not write it down, but I remember quite well I had gone into the garden to inform him his dinner was ready. I found him in admiration before a hydrangea-bed.

"See, François," said he, "how splendid these are this year; each stem supports a bouquet of a wonderful size; they are a better colour than usual, which probably depends on their vital strength."

The sun, disappearing behind the hill of the Valois woods, struck obliquely across our eyes. To avoid the rays, my master turned back towards the house, speaking as if he were in a hurry:—

"To-day I forwarded to Paris the manuscript of

Le Horla ; before a week elapses all the papers will publish the fact that I am mad. It is just as they please, but I am perfectly sane, and knew very well what I was doing, when writing that tale. It is a work of imagination that will startle the reader, and send a few shudders down his back, for it is a strange tale. I must tell you that we do not understand many of the things around us. When, later on, we discover them, we are quite astonished not to have perceived them sooner. Then, our apathy makes us fancy everything is impossible, improbable. For instance, when my book *Une Vie* appeared, the critics, those chatterboxes, who often try to crush a masterpiece because they don't understand it, could not coin terms harsh enough in which to state that my novel was untrue, and that the facts were impossible. Well, those same facts described in my book have just taken place at Fontainebleau ; the printed account of them now lies in my bureau. I can only regret having written my book too soon, for the reality is much better defined and more complete than my novel. That would have enabled me to defeat the most ferocious of my critics ! ”

September.—My master goes shooting as he did in former years, but with less spirit, I fancy. Still he has finished the greater part of his novel *Pierre et Jean*. He began it when we came here, two months and a half ago, and made good progress. My master tells me the shade already given on the path by the young ash trees has been most useful. It was as he was walking there, that *Pierre et Jean* was composed ;

the whole was written in a very short time, especially when you think of the articles and tales produced every week.

"Before we go to Africa," said my master, "I still have a preface to write, which I shall put in front of the novel, telling some things I think about the critics, and how I regard a novel."

As the weather was still very fine, there are yet a good many bathers on the sea-shore. People come to dine almost every evening at "Le Guillette." Among those who come most frequently I remark a tall, white-haired lady. From her complexion, I think she used to be a brunette. They call her Madame Pasca. My master says she is a great actress. She is certainly a most superior person, intelligent, full of common-sense. It was delightful to hear her talk; every one was under the charm of her quiet conversation, so perfectly to the purpose. She had a good influence over my master, who showed the greatest regard for her. . . .

In August, Piroli again had kittens. She did not seem to get well. My master sent for the veterinary, who wrote out a lengthy prescription. When he had done telling us how we were to take care of the poor creature, he added :—

"You know, sir, that cats are nervous; it is therefore extremely difficult to care for them in the way they require."

We did all we could, but the poor little cat died on September the 15th, on my bed in the old boat.

That day, my master was shooting at Ste Hélène,

M. Arnoux's place. Next morning, when he came home, I told him the sad news. He went into the bathroom where I had kept the little body, and asked if she had suffered much ; he wished to hear all the details about the last moments. I said they were harrowing ; the poor little thing rolled about groaning, and clung to me, as if asking me to help her.

Little Pussy remained with us as a living remembrance of Piroli ; she was left in the care of the woman who was to look after the flat during our journey to Africa.

CHAPTER VIII

OCTOBER—NOVEMBER 1887

Our journey to Algeria—White Algiers—We take a flat in the rue Ledru-Rollin—Striking impression produced by an excursion to Cap Matifou with M. Masqueray—When following the "Disenchanted"—What is said by the Arabian women in the mosques—To the Hamman-Righa baths—Unsuccessful shooting—The Mahometan priests and Voltaire—On the road to Kabylia.

MARSEILLES, *October 3rd.*—My master is occupying his usual room at the Hotel de Noailles, it looks out on to the Cannebière.

Towards eleven he told me I was free for the day.

"I have taken our berths on board for twelve to-morrow, I will lunch at the 'Réserve,' and shall be back here at six for dinner."

Next morning my master took me to the old harbour to look at a yacht. It was paid off; they had told him it was for sale. He was pleased with the shape, and the size was exactly what he required.

We had an excellent passage; the sea was like glass; magnificent weather. We reached Algiers, looking snow-white, and built amphitheatre fashion; landing was not an easy matter, indeed it was a disagreeable experience, the Arabs seizing your luggage against your will, and carrying it off to the hotel

that strikes their fancy. Luckily, our porters made no mistakes ; we went to the Grand Hotel de l'Oasis on the quay.

My master was ready to sally forth next morning at nine.

"François, this is what I have settled. As I cannot work at the hotel, I shall take a flat so as to be quite at home. Pray look about you in this neighbourhood, and see if you can find anything suitable ; I will explore Mustapha, a suburb I know well, and if I can find a small villa or flat of the kind I require, I shall ask my mother to come and spend the winter with me."

At last, we took a flat in the rue Ledru-Rollin, after having examined many, and seen numerous Algerine, Arabian, Moorish and Jewish landladies, with large velvety eyes.

Though two of the windows looked South, the apartment had nothing bright about it ; its only advantage was being close to the post. We were on the third floor ; a water-carrier was necessary. I hired the one the portress sent me ; he was a regular Biskri, small, thin, with bare legs and feet ; he had lost his right eye ; the left one was so quick and shifty, I was never able to detect its colour. I offered him so much a week, good average terms, traveller's price. To show he was pleased, I suppose, he beat a tattoo with his thin fingers on the brass jug he held under his arm.

On October the 11th, at one o'clock, I was finishing my lunch, alone as usual, seated before my little

wooden table placed against the wall, when my attention was attracted by the dance of the coffee in my glass ; I immediately went to tell my master, giving him details, leaving not the slightest doubt there was an earthquake.

In the evening, during dinner :

" You were quite right," said my master, " it really was an earthquake. At three minutes to one, at the officers' club, they registered three oscillations of several seconds, from East to West. I am delighted," added he, " to have met all those officers here, their society is very agreeable, they are all charming fellows, well-bred, cultivated ; and some of them thoroughly understand literature. Though we are on French ground, still there is the Mediterranean between us and our own fatherland, that is enough to give us the sensation of being in a foreign country, particularly when you see all those Arabs about the streets, and hear their lingo. We feel stranded, and it is comforting to meet some real Frenchmen, speaking our language, as if we were in Paris. If I listened attentively, I think I could hear the beating of their hearts when the Boulevards and the Maison Dorée are spoken of. Thursday, several of those officers will come to lunch, as well as M. Masqueray and M. Bureau."

October the 14th.—" To-morrow, François," said my master to me, " I shall make an excursion to the point of that headland—Cap Matifou, with M. Masqueray. Will you come ? Perhaps you will never have such an opportunity again. . . . You

will take my gun and a few cartridges, and also shot of different sizes. I shall be pleased if I can get a few birds."

We were off by the 5.48 morning train. As soon as we left Algiers we saw the splendid phosphorescent sea ; a few minutes later, the sun, as if making a tremendous effort, showed, afar off between the horizon and the water, a tiny part of its disc, which immediately set the sea in a blaze. The train stopped at the halting place, called Hussein-Dey. The two gentlemen went on to the quay immediately, and we beheld the most beautiful sunrise one could imagine ; we were in an ecstasy, lost in admiration, I cannot describe the sight ! . . .

My master, leaning with his left hand on M. Masqueray's arm, is waving his right hand to emphasize the descriptive picture he is giving in an excited voice. M. Masqueray, the taller of the two, is bending a little under the pressure of my master's hand, and lending him a most attentive ear ; he listens to his friend with an expression of intense delight, plainly visible on his countenance and in his large sparkling eyes, which vividly betray his enthusiasm and his delight.

I remembered the following part of the conversation.

" Dear friend, this is more than fairy-land, it's an apotheosis ; no words can describe so beautiful a sight, it is unsurpassable, more than splendid, absolutely extraordinary ; so magnificent I cannot put into words the impression that absorbs and enraptures me ; it is the land of wonders. . . . That sea . . .



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the heavens . . . never did I see anything so captivating and which has stirred me so deeply. . . ."

M. Masqueray, bending slightly towards my master, approves of all he says ; then, in scientific terms that I am of course unable to reproduce, gives an explanation of the phenomena.

The whistle had sounded and the train was already moving when I was able to persuade the gentlemen to get into their seats.

The remainder of the journey was less interesting, though the view of the open sea from the extremity of the headland was superb. For me the scenery had lost all attraction ; I was absorbed by the pleasure of listening to the conversation of these two men of genius, who so thoroughly understood each other.

M. de Maupassant often went to Upper Mustapha to dine with M. Tirman, who had explained to him his views on the future of Algeria, on the dams that ought to be constructed, on the budget which ought to be given up to the colony, on the railway question, etc. Apparently all this interested my master, but his face was infinitely more animated when he told me about his Friday walks towards the Arabian cemetery, which amused him so much, that he would often repeat them twice on the same day.

"Hear," he would say, "what the customs of these races are. Those Arabs, who will hardly allow their wives to go out to a mosque, will send them every Friday far out into the country (out of affectation) to the tombs of their departed relatives, to straighten the few pointed stones which keep in memory these

masses of buried humanity. As soon as they come out of these melancholy Elysian fields, most of them turn again into women. To-day, so as to make sure of the facts, I went twice over the road from Lower Mustapha to Hussein-Dey's garden. Well, several of those women, when there were only two of them, and they were sure of not being observed, would lift their veils as they saw me approach. Their faces, always untouched by the light of day, are of a chalky white, and one might say their velvety cheeks are slightly tinted by mauve coloured powder. With their large black eyes, most of them are very pretty."

And I saw a smile behind my master's moustache.

Another time, my master pointed out to me a small mosque, behind the Casbah, near a public garden overhanging the road to St Eugene. It is a very pretty dwelling for a Mahometan saint. My master has described it in his *Travels*. I resolved to go and see it. I had to take my shoes off before entering the sanctuary. From the threshold, I could hear soft, yet far-reaching lamentations. I drew nearer and saw women moaning with strange gesticulations, doubtless invoking some particular saint. In fact, I could not make out what they were about.

As I went out, I met the keeper of the square.

"Did you understand what you saw?" asked he.

"Well, no," I answered.

"Why, you can't understand since you don't know the Arabian language," said he, in a humorous tone; "you clever Frenchmen, you are all the same! . . . Do you know what they are up to, all those

women with their droll and most laughable attitudes ? Why, they are telling the saint all their misfortunes ; for the Arabian women have not the right to pray directly to their God ; that supreme honour is reserved to the men. And I must tell you that they do not say any prayers, only go there to tell their troubles, particularly to slander their husbands, and to confide to the saint their most private sorrows. I must confess they are often right, since the Arabs always keep two or three concubines besides their legitimate wives."

On November the fourth, M. de Maupassant resolves to leave Algiers ; the town tires him, and he hates his flat on account of the mosquitoes.

"This is what we shall do," says he ; "first we shall go to the hot baths at Hammam-Righa, where I intend to follow a certain treatment ; M. Lefèvre, a charming fellow whose acquaintance I have made, will accompany us. When I shall have taken as many baths as I shall think necessary, we will go and hunt panthers with M. Lefèvre in the forests of Theniét-el-Haad, where he alone possesses a house. You will have to take care of the horse ; I suppose you will be able to manage that ? "

I told my master not to be uneasy on that score. . .

November 6th.—My master is detained for a few hours at Algiers ; I start alone with M. Lefèvre in his carriage from the Bou-Medfa station for Hammam-Righa. The hill is a stiff one, the horse often goes a foot pace ; M. Lefèvre is driving. He is perhaps rather inquisitive, but certainly most intelligent ;

he makes me talk as we follow the road which winds about always uphill, and I tell him about some tales of my master's, most of which are already written. He praises me for being so well acquainted with the works of the great writer.

Hammam-Righa, November 9th.—My master gives up shooting in the Theniét-el-Haad forests. M. Lefèvre starts by himself, and my master persists in taking baths, but their temperature is much too high, from 42 to 44 degrees;¹ certainly they do him harm; his nights are very restless. M. Dufour, manager and landlord of the hotel, is a well-bred man with perfect manners; he is very attentive to his guest, and seeks to provide him with everything that can please him. We possess a most remarkable guide, aged nineteen; he knows the woods as well as the cleverest of hounds. He is called Bou-Hyahia, and is covered with that hideous and disgusting scurvy to which most of the inhabitants of this unhappy country are victims.

"The weather is fine," said M. de Maupassant to me one day; "directly after lunch, we will go towards the great ravine and see if there's anything to kill there. Bou-Hyahia will accompany us. Mind you don't allow him to touch my gun, because of that awful skin disease of his. Bar that, he is just the man one wants; he knows the country and every nook in the forests perfectly well."

We started at one o'clock; the heat was intense;

¹ We suppose François means 44 degrees Centigrade, which would answer to about 110 Fahrenheit.—*Note of Tr.*

the more we went down into the hollow, the more we felt the sun. We walked along a small torrent, bright and clear; oleanders growing on the slope hrew their shade on the mirror-like water it was so pleasant to follow, and from which arose a refreshing coolness. I was stopping before this burn and admiring it, when my master called me.

"Come, François, let us go towards that little wood; perhaps I may find some game . . ."

Bou-Hyahia approves, in those extremely flattering terms Arabs know how to find.

We went round the trees, and found ourselves in a splendid meadow; in the shade we beheld groups of Arabs magnificently dressed. They were rolling about on the fresh green turf. When they saw us they were extremely displeased, as if that delightful nook belonged exclusively to them, and was meant for their amusement.

Bou-Hyahia informed us these people were wealthy Arabs who lived in villages on the heights, and that during the excessive heat they came down here in the afternoon to enjoy the refreshing coolness of the river, near the shady trees, accompanied by women.

"If you like, sir," added he, "we will remain hidden in the bushes for a short time and watch them."

Bou-Hyahia said these words as if he were making a request and letting us understand how pleased he would be if it was granted. . . . But my master, as if he had not even heard him, went up the river, making me observe at the same time the multitude

of roots and laurels fed by that beautiful clear water, and of course depositing fever germs in its bed.

After having walked a few hundred yards to the right, we found a lovely, winding, Arabian path, leading, our guide told us, to the forest. We took it and halted half-way (for it was a stiff climb), and we sat down on the slope. A few birds of the country then passed before us. My master shouldered his gun and shot, but brought nothing down; he shot a second time with no success.

"That gun must be defective!" he exclaimed.

So as to make sure, he took aim at an aloe. Well, we only found a few shot scattered about the leaves of the plant. It was a new percussion-gun master had bought to shoot panthers with; he gave me the defective weapon, frowned, and cursed roundly the unscrupulous gun-smith who had sold it him. . . . I then gave him his old gun, which was much heavier, but with which he brought down a bird every time he shot.

When we reached the great forest on the heights, the sun was sinking below the horizon, far away behind the Arabian villages, which, built on the summit of a series of small mountains, looked as if they belonged as much to heaven and to space as to the earth. It was my master who made that observation.

"How delightful it must be," added he, "to live there in that isolation, almost alone; when one is accustomed to it!"

"Yes, sir," said Bou-Hyahia, "putting aside the

intense heat ; those hills are very wholesome, the air is so pure. . . .”

We are now walking on a narrow path, shaded by great leafy trees forming an avenue of foliage ; the coolness is delightful. . . . Our guide goes on quickly ; he wishes to show us the mausoleum of an Arab of some note. He was in past times the saint and governor of the country.

Night has fallen when we reach the mausoleum of the saint described by Bou-Hyahia ; he relates all the miracles performed by this holy Mahometan : they do not much interest my master. True, these stories have a family likeness, and, judging by what our guide tells us, the principal miracles accomplished by the celebrated saint exemplified his clever ways of extracting the poor peasants’ savings from their slender purses.

This revolted my master.

“ Yes ! ” exclaimed he ; “ never mind which country it is, or which religion ; wherever you go, ’tis always the same thing ; ’tis universally a question of money ! All these different cults make you sick ; but if you put them down, they will be replaced by others with the same results. Did you ever read Voltaire, François ? ”

“ No, sir.”

“ Well, what Bou-Hyahia tells us about his saint makes me think of Voltaire. After he had abused every religion, and particularly the Roman Catholic religion, he was expelled from France. He settled in a small borough called Ferney, near the Swiss

frontier ; he was penniless, and by his saintly cleverness, if you like to call it that, he made an income out of the credulous peasants around him, and lived most comfortably. He ended his life very pleasantly in a château built with the money bestowed on him by the Catholics."

Next day we went to take photographs of Bou-Mahomet's tomb.

Bou-Hyahia seized the opportunity of leading us near the haunts of wild boars. We had guns, but not one of these animals showed his snout, to my master's great disappointment, and also to that of the guide, as had he been lucky enough to show some game to his generous patron he would have been certain of an increase of pay.

Rather dissatisfied with the result of the treatment, we left Hammam-Righa, stopped two days at Algiers (in order to get a few things, such as Russian leather boots, my master ought to have received at Théniet-el-Haad for the panther-hunt), and started for Tunis. My master has been told the climate is damper and less enervating than that of Algeria.

We are obliged to take the first train, at six in the morning, for it is the only one ! M. de Maupassant sits at the window, so as to see the sun rise on the sea ; we are alone in the carriage. He throws a glance on the road towards the Arabian cemetery and Hussein Dey's garden, where, sitting on the gates, huge monkeys are visible.

" How frightfully ugly they are ! " he exclaims.

The train stops at every station, and moves along

slow as any tortoise—one might be driving; and we have leisure to admire the landscape. We pass between lofty mountains, then suddenly we hear a most infernal noise.

"We are now passing the 'Iron Gates,'" says my master; "we are in the country of the Kabyles, a country I went through a few years ago on horseback, and which has left me some curious recollections. . . . You know the Kabyle differs absolutely from the Algerine. The latter is a lazy fellow; the Kabyle is both courageous and business-like. You ought to see him at home; he is as clever as the keenest of our Normans."

We pass a small station, then a pretty hamlet, consisting of a few houses. In every direction the eucalyptus brightens the valley.

"That is Thiers," says my master; "the village is small, like the man after whom it is named. But what a brain that man had! What an enormous quantity of work he could accomplish! When I think of that painful moment—the peace of 1871!"

My master's face became crimson, as it always did when, during a conversation, the recollection of the Prussians arose in his mind.

He remained silent, closing his eyes, as if he wished to sleep, so as to think no more of the sorrows of 1870, which made his heart bleed. . . . Still, with closed eyes, he went on telling me about a Kabyle household, living again through those unforgettable events he described so well in his volume, "Au Soleil."

We reached Soukaras about three. After we had

climbed rapidly up the incline for a few hundred yards, they changed the engine specially destined to drag the trains up from Duvivier to this station.

While we were waiting and walking up and down the platform, my master made me observe how everything was new in this country ; even the rails had been quite recently laid down.

"How beautiful this scene is !" cried he in an ecstasy, and stopping still ; "how wide the horizon ! It is splendid ! And the heavens are rose-coloured, do you see ?"

The sun was behind us. M. de Maupassant began to name to me all the tints before us, from the depths of the sky to the width of the horizon, which was merged afar into the undulation of the land. . . . He finished by the enumeration of the different hues floating nearer us above the vineyards. . . . These varying tints depend on whether the vines are still green, or have taken on their reddish winter dress.

My master was enraptured by this magnificent sight ; he wished me so much to understand, and to share his subtle impressions, that he never seemed tired of describing the splendour of what he saw.

"You understand, François, to see and to distinguish, the eye must be educated ; therefore, when you look, you must notice everything ; never be content with want of precision ; you must give time for the eye to define and to follow out those things which are but faintly visible. It is only by slow and patient practice that you can make your eyes do all the work they are capable of. Even the greatest painters

must give themselves trouble, a great deal of trouble, to educate their eyes, and make them really useful."

Then he took out his little green pocketbook and wrote three notes on it, the only ones I saw him write down in the course of ten years. He always wrote from memory, and hardly ever hesitated; his marvellous memory was of the greatest use to him.

CHAPTER IX

NOVEMBER 1887-JANUARY 5TH, 1888

In Tunisia—The Moorish baths—Great success at the officers' club—We journey to Kairouan at a splendid pace—Our stay at Tunis, Marine Avenue—An inspiring fire—Excellent massage by the negro—On the ruins of Carthage—The frolics of Tahya—Italian macaroni?—The stout Tunisian—Tahya is sea-sick.

TUNIS, *November*.—Our first morning was occupied with visiting the ancient Roman baths of Hammam-Lif, a mile and three-quarters from Tunis.

"These hot springs," said my master, "were somewhat celebrated in the olden times; but I am told they have now lost some of their virtue. It may be that the mineral beds, on which they ran underneath the soil, are now exhausted. Let us at least see what kind of an establishment the people keep."

While my master spoke, we went through large fields, where more than forty pairs of oxen were drawing ploughs, and turning up a rich, dark-brown mould nearly black; it is about the most fertile ground that exists, full of all the substances that bring good crops. The numerous labourers work with groups of three or four teams; they follow each other, and look like one, being so much alike and stepping so regularly as they tread by the furrow which takes them almost

out of sight, and so far that the distance makes them look like dwarfed creatures.

On our left, almost on the shore of the lake, we saw some huge white walls. My master questioned the guide.

"Those are the farm buildings of M. Brolmann," said he.

Still we followed the high road ; a little farther on, we reached a railway barrier, and saw the rails all covered with rust.

"That," said my master, "is the beginning of the railway ; now it only goes as far as Hammam-Lif ; but they will soon continue it into the interior of the province."

After a quarter of an hour's walk, we stopped before an old building forming a square of a certain size, but in very bad preservation ; the windows were exceedingly small, some were rounded, others square, all had iron bars. It looked like a prison, or else an antiquated fortress. Some dirty children, in tatters, were playing in a dark alley, the entrance to this strange dwelling. The threshold consists of a grey stone, a foot and a half high, so that one must lift one's legs up considerably to get in.

Once in, my master questioned the tallest of the boys. He understood French very well, and went to call the tenant of these Moorish baths. She was a long-legged woman, with a short waist, a dark oval face, and swelling hips, and she was tying a striped pink and red apron on while coming towards us.

"If you wish to see the baths, gentlemen," said she very politely, "pray come this way."

We followed her" through numerous dark and narrow passages, and finally got to the bathroom.

"Is that all you have?" asked my master.

"Yes," answered she.

My master hastened to thank her, and she took us back to the entrance. It was just as well she did so, otherwise we never should have found our way.

As soon as he got outside, my master took a deep breath and looked about him, like a man who has been for a long time deprived of both air and light.

"Did you ever see anything so hideous?" exclaimed he. "It was repugnant, such dirt, such a horrid aspect! Those baths looked like so many sarcophagi, they were all chipped and broken. Only just deep enough to receive a human body. Those boxes, lit up by a little porthole, made me think of the subterranean dungeons of the Middle Ages. No, no, my good lady, I shan't be one of your customers; you won't see me here again!" . . . "She's a Maltese, that woman," he added, "and of an interesting type; I am not sorry to have seen her."

After crossing the railway again, we met an old carriage, apparently of the fashion of 1830. Inside it M. de Maupassant recognised the son of the Bey of Tunis. Then we walked very quickly, like people who have already lost too much time. We have hardly enough leisure to observe the entrance to the town, a large open doorway, about which we see some mounds of earth, all that remains, we are told, of the fortifications. Not a tree: all is bare, dry, and melancholy.

My master came in at seven in the evening.

" Please prepare my portmanteau, with all I may require for an eight or ten days' trip. I went to the officers' club, having letters of introduction for several of them. After the first few words, one of them exclaimed, ' We are delighted to see you, and how lucky you should have come to us just to-day ! ' And he added, ' Stop a minute, I will run and see if there is still time.' He put his cap on and was away a quarter of an hour, during which I continued to chat about the manners and customs of the Tunisians, and also of the Parisians. He came in, looking very pleased.

" ' This, M. de Maupassant,' said he, ' is what I am able to offer you, on the part of the Manager of the Bank of Tunis ; will you accompany him on a journey he is about to take in his landau through Tunisia up to Kairouan, where he is going to inspect the farms of Lanfida, farms such as probably you have never seen yet ? He was to have started to-day, but if you will kindly accept his invitation, he will put his departure off till to-morrow morning at nine. You will be a party of four : the manager will be accompanied by two secretaries, both ex-officers who have taken part in the French expedition to this beautiful Tunisia, which, I am sure, will inspire you to write pages still more eloquent than those you have written on Algeria in your volume " Au Soleil ! " "

" Well, I accepted ! " . . . " And on all the faces surrounding me I could read the joy given by my visit. Away from the heart of France, life is so

monotonous! I understand the pleasure they felt in conversing a few moments with a writer who had amused them often by his tales and his novels. Suddenly, I began to laugh mentally; I had just perceived that without knowing it, they were forming a circle round me, just as men do at an evening party, round a beauty who is much admired. . . . I felt a sort of saddened joy, they were all such charming fellows, and their countenances were so open! At last we sat down and the conversation continued, interesting but unpretending: we discussed the writers of the day. I saw that most of these soldiers were admirers of Paul Bourget."

Next morning at nine, a landau stops before the door of the hotel; four gentlemen are seated inside; they all wear large cloaks with capes, and light grey wideawakes. One of these is my master, and without my noticing any motion of the coachman's, the two splendid horses start at a great pace, carrying off, towards the Mountains of Numidia, the literary godson of that Flaubert who, by his magical skill, evoked in his "Salamambo" all the mighty past, the magnificence of that country.

December.—M. de Maupassant has returned, delighted with his journey. He was deeply interested by the great mosque of Kairouan; and he found his trip by sea, from Sfax to Susa, most agreeable.

"I had a good inspiration," said he, "before I left, in telling you to read my mother's letters; thus, by the telegraphic summaries you sent me, my news of her was as regular as if I had remained here."

I then informed my master that I had discovered in the modern part of Tunis a Hammam perfectly well appointed ; there were shower-baths and vapour-baths.

"Excellent!" cried he ; "now, I must have private rooms, for I shall never be able to work in this hotel. I won't live in the Arabian city, not at any price. See what you can find in the French town."

After searching a good deal, I found at last, through the good offices of a Jew, a nice lodging on the Avenue de la Marine, exactly what we wanted. The first night, however, my master felt cold, and this was most embarrassing, as there was no fireplace! It was the same in all the apartments we had seen. My master was extremely provoked.

"Only think, François, . . . under that terrace there is no warmth, the damp of the night falls on my head! . . ."

I understood that at any price we must kindle a fire, and resolved that in a couple of hours (it was then half-past seven) there would be a good fire in the dining-room. And before ten struck, a stove was roaring there and, like a little steam-engine, was sending its smoke up above the terrace.

A few days elapsed ; my master was apparently satisfied. One day, during breakfast, he praised the Hammam.

"Their shower-baths are first-rate! Yesterday I took an excellent vapour-bath, followed by massage. That negro who massages is extraordinary, and incredibly strong, like Kakléter. He turns you about

on the table as if you were a small child. He juggles with your limbs as if he intended to detach them from the body, and yet with absolute gentleness, without hurting you in the least. To finish you up he jumps on to the table, seizes your legs, and passes his heel all down your spine ; then he puts you back on the table, just like a rabbit that one has killed by this same operation.

"Afterwards I interviewed the manager of the establishment, for, I confess, I was somewhat frightened. But he reassured me completely, giving me very precise details about the skill of this negro-masseur. Really, I never met with a masseur who could vie with him."

December 17th.—My master is working hard ; the little stove has had a beneficial influence.

December 18th.—"François," said my master, "you will wake me to-morrow at five ; I am going to the hospital, where Dr Charvot is to amputate the leg of an unfortunate fellow who in ten days' time will walk with a wooden leg adapted to the stump. If the doctor is to be believed, he is to apply a preparation to the limb which will cure it in a very short time."

M. de Maupassant came in at nine, and asked for water for his toilet.

"I am not inclined to work this morning," said he ; "I want to take the air. You can't imagine what that hospital is : it is a human charnel-house, a mass of corruption—horrible ! Or rather all the horrors put together—it is shameful—shameful.

Outside, around the walls, the dead, the dying rolled in rags; they are Arabs, I am told, not admitted inside, there being no room. Twice a week, a cart comes round; they look to see which are dead; they are thrown into the cart, and buried in some corner.

During breakfast, M. de Maupassant looked at me, "Why, François, you are looking ill?"

"Yes, sir, I have pains in the chest, and can't rest at night."

"Well, if you like, this afternoon you will drive with me to Carthage; we will take the dog Tahya;¹ we will make her run—that will do her good."

When the carriage started, the dog seemed delighted, and bounded about like a mad thing. But, scarcely a quarter of an hour after we had left the city-gates behind us, she saw a flock of sheep. She flew off as fast as her legs would carry her. My master, surprised, made me observe she ran faster than the Italian train going towards La Goulette.

Carthage was a most disappointing sight for my master: there only remain a few traces of walls, and stones scattered about the ground. A few blades of grass grow between the pebbles. Not a vestige of the palace of Salammbo, or of the site of the sycamore wood, or of the field of roses. Now, it is but a plain. . . . My master remains silent; his mind doubtless is absorbed by the events of which this spot was the scene. Perhaps he is evoking Salammbo undergoing Tanit's influence, or he sees her again under Mathô's tent, and beholds the surprise of that barbarian.

¹ A sloughi or Arabian greyhound.—*Note of Tr.*

"Although nothing remains," he says at last, "the atmosphere seems yet pervaded by the perfume of lemon-trees and cypresses. . . ."

Then, throwing his glance afar, towards the blue sea, he adds :—

"The imaginary island," that Mathô offered Salammbo in his delirious love, when he had broken her symbolical chain, was very far away ! "

As we were returning to Tunis, we passed on the road a donkey decorated with a collar of bells, and two Arabs on bicycles.

"That donkey," said my master, "is evidently the one Flaubert mentions in Salammbo; he wears round his neck the insignia of the fortune of battle; . . . but the bicyclists would certainly have astonished the Carthaginians. . . ."

Three days after this, Major Charvot, who had given Tahya to my master, brought her back, telling him she had been found at Bizerte by a washerman of that town who had taken her to him; but that was not her first escapade.

My master resolved to put her on to the terrace of the house where she could gambol about; this would accustom her to know her own dwelling. Hardly an hour had elapsed when I heard some one calling at the bottom of the staircase. It was a neighbour begging me to come and take back our dog. Tahya, by a most powerful bound, had jumped over the walls that divided the two houses, and gone down a small staircase leading to this lady's kitchen, no doubt attracted by the scent of the stew !

Then we decided on tying her up, but my master soon changed his mind, for she resisted with all the impetus of her vagabond spirit. If we had persisted, she certainly would have bitten us; thus she was allowed to do as she pleased. She often absented herself, then after a few days she would return, rather ashamed of herself, but that feeling was soon forgotten, and she looked out for her next chance. She did not belie her parentage.

December 23rd.—M. de Maupassant is working more and more. To-day I see the heap of paper he has used has much increased, I count the leaves, he has covered thirty-seven foolscap pages with writing in one day. I mention this to him, saying it is too much, and that if he tires his brain he will be a victim to headaches.

"No, no," replies he, smiling, "this does not tire me, I am merely giving an account of a journey, the words come spontaneously, I do not have to seek for them, my memory could furnish them to two pens like mine."

All this work does not prevent my master from lunching very often at the officer's club, or else some of them come here.

"Next Thursday," said he one day, "several of those gentlemen are coming to dinner; I want you to cook a dish of macaroni in the Italian fashion with great care, for you know the manager of the Bank was formerly an Italian Minister. We don't exactly know, but it is said he killed in various duels several of his countrymen, which fact caused him to

leave his native country. He came here, and out of revenge he has taken sides with the French."

The guests came on Thursday. I did all I could to please their palates, chose dishes in great request with epicures, woodcocks, etc. All went well until I entered the dining-room carrying a salad-bowl filled with smoking macaroni. I had to do the best I could, not possessing a vegetable-dish. But my master was not pleased; he frowned at me, then so as the incident should pass unnoticed, he said to the manager: "that did not seem to be the good macaroni he was in the habit of eating." But the gentleman returned so often to the dish that it soon remained quite empty. Then Victor Emmanuel's ex-minister said, addressing my master:

"Assuredly, M. de Maupassant, macaroni prepared Italian fashion is very good, but the dish we have been partaking of is a hundred times better, let us call it French if you like, but I will swear I have never eaten anything more delicious."

I saw immediately the usual kindly expression come on my master's face, my salad-bowl was forgiven, and all began to talk of cooking. They seemed amused, conversation went on swimmingly.

"If we have the pleasure of taking an excursion together," exclaimed one of the guests at the end of the meal, "we will request you, dear sir, to bring the man who cooked the excellent dinner we have so enjoyed at your table."

"Certainly, certainly!" . . . cried all the others, giving my master no time to reply.



ALGIER, 31 OCT., 1890. A SHADY SPOT IN THE JARDIN D'ESSAI

December 25th.—Some richly dressed Jewesses are passing along the Avenue de la Marine ; while looking at them my master asked me if the guide had pointed out to me the fat Tunisian woman, one of the celebrities of the place.

“ Yes, sir ! ”

“ What a monster it is ! ” said he, ‘tis not even a round ball but a mountain of fat. That is what they admire here. What a curious town it is with its mixture of nationalities and customs ! . . . Later on we will return here for a few months ; for I intend to extract an interesting novel from this complicated mass of ingredients ! ‘Twill be amusing to write and highly comical. . . . ”

January 6th, 1888.—This is the day of our departure. The landlady comes about the inventory. I tell her all we have bought, furniture, kitchen utensils, etc., will become hers. . . . She blushed slightly, and asked if she would be allowed to thank M. de Maupassant. I introduced her to my master, who bowed very low to this lady, widow of a Spanish officer ; she was very beautiful. . . .

For our journey to the station I was helped by two porters, the washerman, and a delegate of the butcher. Having registered the luggage, I kept somewhat in the background with all these people. Master was in the midst of the platform, surrounded with about twenty civilians and military men ; many of the officers wished to accompany him to the small boat that starts from La Goulette, carrying the passengers on board the transatlantic steamer in the offing. . . .

It is the *Moses* which is to convey us in thirty-six hours to Marseilles. All our luggage is aboard. . . . My master talks to the captain who is on the bridge. It is six in the evening, we are out at sea, land has disappeared. Besides, it is night, I walk about on deck where my master joins me.

"Those officers and fellow-countrymen," says he, "who live at Tunis, have shown me tremendous kindness which I fancy may be sincere, still occasionally it seemed to me rather exaggerated; I forgot that you must look at things on all sides, and that being far away from France, we must allow people to be rather expansive. And you know, François, we are on one of the good old boats of the Transatlantic Company. The captain tells me he has every confidence in her, she is almost entirely built of wood and she is a good sea-goer."

We went towards that part of the ship where poor Tahya had been put, according to rule, and where her fellow-creatures were kept. The poor thing is already sea-sick, her beautiful muzzle sinks into the dirt; her tail, her pretty tail which she generally carries so proudly, now droops behind her like a rag. My master speaks to her, she does not even appear to know him; the sloughi was paying her tribute to the sea.

The passage was anything but a good one, the sea was running high, and our *Moses* did not roll, but already pitched hard. By order every one had to leave the deck.

"François," said my master, "you can go to

your berth, I have given my orders to the steward, we shall have all we want, and if you are sea-sick, remain lying down, it is the best thing you can do."

I thanked him, and hardly had I reached the cabin when I found myself in the same condition as poor Tahya.

Once I had landed at Marseilles all my sickness disappeared as if by magic. I could not say as much for poor Tahya, she could not stand on her legs, so, at the *hôtel de Noailles* where we put up, she was the first that needed to be attended to.

CHAPTER X

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1888

The *Zingara* transformed into the *Bel Ami*—A perilous voyage—At Porquerolles—A mysterious apparition—The exile of a Second Empire Cassandra—Strange revelations about the society of the Tuileries—Curious foresight about the catastrophe of the "Year of Terror"—We start for Cannes on board the *Bel Ami*—Tahya's significant welcome.

WE were most comfortable at the *hôtel de Noailles*. It is true my master has stayed there for many years. He is always served by the same people, and has the same room at the corner looking out on the Cannebière.

It is singular that whenever we stay at this hotel we always meet a Monsignore there—my master notices it.

"Every time we come here," says he with a good-natured smile, "I see violet braid on the carpet."

My master's first thought was for the yacht he had remarked when he passed through in October 1887, and which he had been tempted to buy. The boatmen examined it with him; Raymond, armed with a hatchet, stove in part of the flooring, he went down into the hold and hit the lining of the yacht; it groaned as if it was hurt. Bernard also had gone down; they came up together. My master put a

few questions to the keeper of the boat ; then we went back to town, following the quay of La Fraternité which is lined with popular restaurants and shops where they sell soup and the famous Marseilles dish, " Bouillabaisse." The quay does not belie its name, it is really " Fraternity " here, those who make up this stirring crowd are on the best of terms ; the whole picture would appear original and striking were we not in Marseilles.

As we walked along, the seamen told my master that the yacht was in capital condition and built with the best wood that exists, white Scotch oak.

On January the 18th, at six in the morning, my master, Bernard, Raymond and I, were in the old harbour of Marseilles, and went on board the *Zingara*, which from that day took the name of *Bel Ami*. The weather is uncertain, there is a slight swell.

" That means billows afar," says Bernard. And yet we decide on going to sea. Towards seven a small tug drew the *Bel Ami* in half-an-hour to a point opposite the Chateau d'If. The hawser was unfastened, we were left to our own resources. The big sail was unfurled, then a jib, and the mizzen sail. That was all, we could no longer spread the standing jib. There was no particular wind, but the groundswell tossed our poor little vessel about most unmercifully.

" I should prefer a hurricane," said Bernard, " to this breeze on such a sea."

Then he began to curse ; but the Golfe du Lion apparently did not listen to Bernard, and continued

to send us huge waves, sometimes fighting against each other and striking vehemently, as they broke, on the sides and the deck of the *Bel Ami*.

My master was at the helm, and seemed quite collected ; I can't say as much for myself, for though we were very busy in sailing our boat, I was feeling rather cold, probably on account of the heavy sea.

My master noticed it.

"François," said he, " take a glass of champagne."

We saw it was useless to try and rise above these enormous waves, and decided to ply between the coast and the islands of Jarre and Rion.

We had just passed the Ile de Mairé, and after we had tossed about for an hour, the sea was becoming somewhat calmer, when we fell into a deep fog ; we were in complete darkness and hardly moving, as we did not know where we were going, the boat was running through a compact mass of white foam. Towards half-past ten the fog cleared, we could see the sky. The current was driving us towards the coast, near which there was a good deal of danger. The *Bel Ami* was moving with difficulty. Bernard swore, Raymond cursed, calling on all the gods of the sea, my master was always at the tiller showing the same self-possession. . . . Raymond stepped into the small boat and took us in tow, plying his oars well. It was necessary to avoid the coast.

Then my master begged Bernard to take the tiller, saying he would go down and rest on the divan. But he gave orders he should be told as soon as we should be nearing Cassis ; he wished to take the helm

again when we entered that small harbour. We arrived at one o'clock, lunching for the first time on board the *Bel Ami*. I think it was the best meal we ever enjoyed there. Our excursion had given us a tremendous appetite.

In the afternoon my master took a walk that soon made him forget the little annoyances of the morning. He came back, looking as merry as usual.

"What splendid weather!" he exclaimed, "those fields full of yellow flowers, bright with the sunlight, are simply dazzling!"

Next day, in the early morning, the *Bel Ami*, after leaving the narrow channel of Cassis, launched her prow resolutely towards the open sea. The yacht was in good trim, the weather seemed fine, there was a fresh breeze. All went well, that day was perfect for our sailing trip.

At two o'clock the *Bel Ami* was moored in the harbour of the little bay of Porquerolles, and M. de Maupassant, in grey hat and jacket, carrying his alpenstock, went off to explore this unknown corner. Raymond and I set off in search of soft water. I saw some superb cauliflowers in a kitchen-garden on the way, and asked the countrywoman if she would sell me two, which she did very willingly. We returned to the yacht as pleased as if we had made the most unheard-of discovery.

When he came in that evening, my master asked about our walk, and whether we had found some soft water.

"Yes," said Raymond, "and better still, François

discovered some splendid cauliflowers, also milk and cream."

I went into the saloon.

"It seems you have brought back some provisions," said my master.

"Yes, sir."

"Well, and I have found an excellent subject for an article. I really am the only man who meets with these surprising events! I went off with the intention of exploring the island; of course I had not the least idea of all I was to learn and see. I had already walked a long way and was about to turn to the right so as to come back, for on the southern slope the paths are difficult, indeed scarcely traced out. Still I thought I should like to see the shore beyond that wild-looking spot. And I went on, taking a narrow path bordered by encroaching bushes.

"I was astonished when in that deserted corner I saw a lady coming towards me! I went on, she advanced also. She was tall, and her dress recalled to me the fashion of 1830; she came nearer and nearer. I asked myself if I was dreaming. When she was quite close to me I stood back among the bushes to allow her to pass, and I bowed to her. She immediately stopped.

"Oh! sir," said she, "I quite understand your astonishment at finding a woman alone in such an isolated spot, and I must tell you I have lived here many years, and you are but the second Parisian whom I have seen! Do not tell me you do not come from Paris! I see it, I feel it, though fashions have

altered since the time when I lived in that delightful place !

She said all this without my having uttered a word ; she added she would be much pleased if I would tell her my name, which I did.

" Will you kindly come this way ? " she added. " We can find a broader road which will take us towards the sea."

As we were walking side by side she spoke again.

" I am extremely happy to have met you and to know who you are ; you will forgive my not revealing my name to you. Besides, it would tell you nothing. What may perhaps interest you is to know the motive for which I have been here for so many years, alone, absolutely alone with my maid, in the midst of this wilderness, before this blue immensity " (she was showing me the sea). " Still I like the ocean ; my only amusements come from its eternal variety, the ships that pass and repass. . . . The sea and the blue sky are my only confidants, I am never tired of admiring the innumerable stars that are reflected in that vast and incomparably beautiful mirror. It is mine, mine only. . . . I somewhat satisfy with that possession a little of my former vanity. In winter when the sea is high, strange noises are heard ; I am accustomed to them, and happily for me, I do not know fear.

" But I have not told you the reason of my presence here. Listen.

" When Napoleon III. reigned over our dear France, I was a great lady and lived in Paris ; my

connections, those of my family were such as to enable me to see from afar the public calamities that threatened my beloved country. I did my best, seeking to warn the Government; they would not listen to me; I then spoke out, I wrote . . . I was arrested. . . . Still I went on, and was condemned to banishment. . . .

"Such, sir, is my story. Napoleon, a very clever man, whatever people may say, had but one fault, he was ill. . . . However, knowing my love for my country, he consented to my staying here on French ground on one condition, which was, that I should never leave this spot or reveal to anyone my name and position. I gave my word, and must keep it."

"Then we conversed about the period of the Second Empire. The names that recurred most frequently were those of Ricord the Emperor's doctor, and Feuillet the writer. She had known Monsieur Thiers and Jules Simon well. I bowed to her most respectfully when I left her. She put her hand out to me, saying: 'Allow me to shake hands with the celebrated writer, M. de Maupassant,' and added almost below her breath: 'If I dared, I would ask if your *Bel Ami* still continues to reap its great success. . . .' She may be fifty-five years of age, and must have been exquisitely pretty; there is still a great deal of character in her face."

On the 21st, at nine o'clock in the morning, we began manœuvring to leave the harbour of Porquerolles. We had a great deal of trouble, the breeze was too

slight, the *Bel Ami's* sails are not ample enough ; besides which, they are in a very bad condition. The yacht moved heavily, did not yield, was very difficult to steer, and seemed on the point of touching the rocks bordering that bay.

Then Bernard gave me a boat-hook telling me how to use it. Armed with this heavy perch I was trying as hard as I could to push the boat away without much altering its position ; at last a slight wind came to our assistance and the *Bel Ami* went on by its own impetus. My master, of course, was at the tiller, but he said never a word. When we were in difficulties, Bernard bore all the responsibility.

As soon as we had left the harbour we went on towards the open sea. When five miles out, we sailed towards Cannes (which was to be our goal), as well as the wind permitted ; tacking about occasionally.

We passed Cap Benat ; the Port-Cros and Levant islands ; Bernard told us the names of these bays, harbours, islands and capes ; he knew all the points of the coast apparently. My master looks at the map, everything is correct. Much flattered by this approbation, Bernard continues naming the capes we are about to pass : Cap Nègre, the Baie de Cavalaire, Cap Lardier, La Tour de Camaret, St Tropez, etc. He also showed us behind the Moorish mountains a rock in the shape of an enormous eagle's beak.

"That," said he, "is an excellent guiding-mark for sailors."

The day and night were not too unpleasant, we

really had gone pretty far ; on the second day the wind was quite the thing for the *Bel Ami* ; on the second night, towards half-past one in the morning, we passed St Raphael, and three-quarters of an hour later we saw afar, and very low down, the tiny light of the pretty bay of Agay.

" Towards half-past four sir," said Raymond, " we shall reach Cannes."

Hardly ten minutes had elapsed when Bernard spoke :—

" That's a bad sign, sir, the breeze is leaving us and a ground-swell is coming on from Genoa."

Bernard went forward, stooped down, got up again, put his hands above his eyes ; then he declared the sea was very high out yonder. We had already found that out, the *Bel Ami* was dancing about in fine style.

It was decided that we should re-enter the bay of Agay, and we backed accordingly. I think we were at about a mile from the entrance to this bay, I can't say exactly, because it was very hard work, and at night, the lights can mislead the most practised eye,—anyhow, neither the sailors or my master felt sure of getting into harbour. . . .

Raymond was pluck itself.

" We must bear out to sea ! " cried he.

So they manœuvred again, and the breeze from the gulf was of use to the *Bel Ami* which got a little out at sea, where the wind seemed to die away.

But the billows were surging more and more, they formed huge mountains of water, then made holes into

which the boat dropped, till one might think it would never come up again.

"Not a bad boat," said Bernard, "it is never taken unawares, but climbs on to the waves like a lion on the rocks."

About ten we were still worse off, and had a very bad time, we really knew no longer what to do; many ropes and the rigging had given way, there remained only the big sail on the yacht, the perpetual rocking and the surf had detached the fastenings. We repaired all we could, but hardly had we finished on one side than everything gave way on the other. All the ropes securing the large sail were tied to the netting as well as to the foot of the masts. I thought of Tahya at that moment. She had been sent to Cannes, and was quietly lying in a warm railway carriage.

We took some champagne several times, really we needed it; my master drank tea. Though always at the helm, he seemed quite composed. When things were at the worst, he would say a few comforting words to us.

"When at sea," he would add, "one must always be prepared for the unexpected!"

There was an improvement at three in the afternoon, the swell was lower and less jerky, we had made about two miles since two in the morning. Towards four in the afternoon the breeze grew stronger, blowing from the open sea; then there were not enough of us to hoist the sails! We put up all the canvas we could. At seven the *Bel Ami* was anchored

in Cannes harbour; next us was the *Ville de Marseilles*, which in future was destined to be often our neighbour.

That evening we went to the apartment Madame de Maupassant had furnished, rather plainly, for herself and my master at the villa.

Tahya was awaiting us at the door as if she knew we were coming, she was most demonstrative towards my master, constantly jumping up to him. But my master went straight to his mother who was in the hall and gave her a sound kiss.

"How are you?" asked he.

"Pretty well, and you, my dear child?"

But Tahya was dissatisfied, she continued to oblige my master to take notice of her, opening a huge mouth and whimpering. Her complaints were both angry and beseeching; occasionally one might have supposed they were produced by some unknown musical instrument or else were the language of the wild inhabitants of the desert, the birthplace of this tender-hearted Tahya.

"Perhaps," thought I, "she is talking to my master in the dialect she heard when a puppy, away in the sand-desert!"

At last he noticed her, it was but time, she was just on the point of becoming aggressive.

When in my bed all night I felt as if being tossed about, undergoing the same sensation as if I were still on the deck of the yacht.

Next morning my master made an appointment with the Antibes shipbuilder, and it was decided the

Bel Ami should be refitted with copper, should be strongly ballasted, and that new sails should be immediately ordered from Livton's, the best English firm. These sails were to be larger, stronger, more developed than the former ones.

CHAPTER XI

FEBRUARY 1888—FEBRUARY 1889

Tahya and Pussy are introduced to each other—Rue Montchanin—A dinner-party at the house of Alexandre Dumas the younger—Mysterious disappearance of an ancient ivory carving, replaced by the portrait of a lady—We return to Cannes—The *Bel Ami* on the stocks—Noble confession of a writer who "struggles sometimes so as not to think"—Recollections about Flaubert—M. de Maupassant defeats the Duke de Chartres in the battle of flowers—General A—tells of his last charge in 1870—They were very great ladies . . .—I go to M. Waldeck Rousseau's house—A duel which does not come off—To Aix-les-Bains—In the mountains, Maupassant resolves to remain a bachelor—An English lord wants to know the site of one of Maupassant's works, and wishes to become acquainted with refined French wit—Old furniture, old friends—François does not understand titles—An aristocratic dinner-party—Philology is mentioned and Madame de Maupassant shows her great learning—*Fort comme le Mort* is published—Young literary men mob the author—Dolls are given to the writer—A Norman doctor moulded his brain.

TEN days later we returned to Paris, and here at the rue Montchanin all our trunks arrived from Africa, and also Pussy, quite as inquisitive as her mother used to be. Her nose examined all the parcels; she took her time, it was a regular inspection. . . . My master also has taken note of every thing, nothing has been lost, all is satisfactory. The large Kairouan carpet has been placed in the drawing-room, the others

are dispersed in various directions. My master is pleased with their effect, and proud of his purchases. . . .

What a change in the weather! It is snowing, and bitterly cold, which seems even more painful after leaving those sunny lands! Tahya does not want to go out, she has chosen the softest carpet and lies full length on it. Pussy may tease her and jump on her back as much as she likes, it is of no use, she will not stir. My master is with them in the drawing-room seated in his sleigh which I have surrounded with tables, he is looking over the work accomplished during his journey and preparing more.

"This evening," said M. de Maupassant, on February the 2nd, "I am dining with M. Dumas the younger; he has written me a charming letter, almost too amiable. I really think he is desirous of hearing me recount my travels!"

Next morning my master told me about the evening.

"How amusing Dumas is, and how sincere! On the threshold of the drawing-room, he said, addressing his wife: 'Go in, my dear, go in, because I intend to kiss Marie in the ante-room.' Marie is a friend of his; and he did exactly as he said he would."

My master was about to continue, when he abruptly changed the subject.

"I shall give Tahya away—here she is bored to death; where she is going, there is a large courtyard, and there are horses. That will amuse her; she must find it very cold in this country when she goes out, notwithstanding her coat. Ah! I have bought myself a fur pelisse. They will bring it to—

morrow, they had to alter it slightly. And pray, François, send my shower-bath apparatus to Cannes. And while I think of it, on Thursday I am giving a dinner of sixteen ; cook us a good dinner, let us have some sweetbreads *en caisse* if you can manage it."

On one of the panels of the drawing-room my master has hung a pretty water-colour of M. Leloir's, representing people in fancy dresses appearing before the police ; on the right, on the same panel, there are ancient miniatures of my master's ancestors ; below is placed an exquisite Louis XV. writing-table, supporting an old-rose China vase, and a beautiful ivory carving, most exquisitely finished. This carving represented the coronation of King Clovis by St Remy in the Cathedral of Reims.

One morning I was astounded, the beautiful carving was replaced by the portrait of a lady : Such was my disappointment that I did not even notice whether she was ugly or pretty ! I was no longer to have a chance of admiring this treasure, where every figure was so perfect and stood out so beautifully ! The figures were small, but exquisitely finished ; a soft patina embellished this triumph of art, and it had probably disappeared for ever ! I was really distressed, and so provoked about the lady's portrait, that I should have enjoyed throwing it out of the window ! Luckily, it did not remain there even a day ; that evening it was replaced by an old picture in a small frame. My master, generally so outspoken on the subject of his art-treasures, preserved absolute silence about this alteration.

On March the 12th M. d'Hubert walked into the drawing-room. He came to plead the cause of the *Gil Blas*, the editor of which wished to publish M. de Maupassant's next novel. After his departure my master immediately set to work with me to alter arrangements in the dining-room. A red cloth rug, picked out with yellow silk and gold embroidery, was placed on the ground facing the door of the drawing-room. The shopkeeper who sold it stated it had been worn by Henry the Second's charger.

Cannes, April 6th.—We went to Antibes to see how the workmen were getting on with the repairs of the *Bel-Ami*. We found the yacht aground, resting on its keel, supported on each side by great wooden posts. All the lower part, up to the water line, was covered with pretty red copper; above that line she had been scraped, mended, and had already received a coat of painting: the important repairs are finished.

"Inside," says Bernard, "everything is done; but all the openings are shut up to avoid dust. I can't let you see it to-day."

"All right," said my master smiling. "To examine the *Bel-Ami*, we should also have had to climb a ladder, rather high up, too, for the yacht, standing out of the water, looks like a sort of giant."

My master seems pleased his boat can be set afloat again in a week.

"I have received a letter from Livton's firm," said he to Bernard; "the sails will be sent in a few days."

We returned to Cannes on foot from Antibes, by the high road, thus passing before our old dwelling, the "Châlet des Alpes."

"We were not uncomfortable there," said my master, looking at it.

But he now is bent on buying a house at the Golfe Juan, which we reached twenty minutes later. We saw a path leading to a large white château, standing rather far down the valley.

"It is in this direction," says my master.

I beheld, about a thousand yards away, an isolated house, very dismal-looking, almost in a swamp; there were reeds everywhere. I showed my master this detail, stating that it was certainly a very damp neighbourhood, enough to give one fever.

"Certainly not," replied master, "it is too near the sea. And I shall keep a carriage and horse, so as you may fetch the provisions and carry my letters to the post. When the fine weather comes my boat will be moored opposite, with two anchors and solid moorings; there will be no danger. . . . My mother will come and live with me here; I am sure she will be happy in this isolated spot."

I was very much grieved to see my master keep to this plan, which I thought unsuitable in every way. As we were walking on the road, always rather too quick for me (for my master's step was longer than mine), I felt uneasy, as if I already had a touch of fever. I wanted to find a way of convincing my master this house was not at all what he wanted, particularly if he thought of buying it.

"And why should he? My master already possesses La Guillette, and many other dwellings!"

Still talking we reached a point higher up, above Cannes and the Croisette; further on were the islands, and, lastly, a rose-coloured sun sent its rays on Cap Roux as if it would pour its fire on that mass of red porphyry.

"After all," said I, "this side is much more beautiful; there is a wider perspective than at the extremity of the Golfe Juan——"

"Yes, on this side the prospect is much more attractive, and perhaps you are right. That house we have just seen would be rather far off. But what would you have? We artists, sometimes, do hanker after solitude. I must also confess that when it comes to business we are not always very practical. For instance, when at Marseilles I saw you had given me excellent advice about the sale and purchase of my boats, and particularly for the excursion on board the smaller *Bel-Ami*. Perhaps the explanation is that our mind is occupied by the novel developing in our brain. At least it is so with me, *though I sometimes struggle hard not to think*. . . . Wherever I am, anything I see, as long as it is interesting, becomes for me a subject of study. This fact causes us to be only half ourselves, and we become inferior beings when it is a question of the details of everyday life.

"And yet I do not allow myself to be entirely absorbed, as Flaubert was. Nothing but his work existed for him; his prose and his person formed

one block. He never would have disturbed himself to go to his publisher to get the money that was owed him. . . . I must, however, confess that in my youth I have sometimes seen him very merry ; he could coin such ingenious sayings to make us laugh ! When I was but a youngster I loved him dearly, I felt his superiority ; his good-natured countenance, his large, soft and expressive eyes beneath his powerful forehead, charmed me ; I was attracted by him. . . ."

We reached Cannes. On the right we faced a splendid park with fine trees ; at the further end stood a large house we could not see very distinctly——

"Some friends of mine, Parisians," said my master, "are about to buy that fine estate."

My master took me aside in the evening, at the end of dinner.

"François," said he, "I have spoken to my mother, and we shall remain here ; the boat will come into port at Cannes, and, when paid off, will be moored off Antibes."

I breathed again. . . .

The next morning Madame de Maupassant agreed with me completely.

"How right you are, my good François ; let us avoid complicating matters."

When thinking again of the apprehension caused me by that melancholy dwelling of Golfe Juan, I endeavoured to show my master what a pity it would have been to desert that apartment with its three beautiful sunny rooms with Genoese hangings. It was so gay, and so warm, without kindling any fires.

It is there that my master sketched the plan of *Fort Comme la Mort* after many discussions with his mother, who never would accept the ending: a violent death under the wheels of an omnibus.

Cannes, April 7th.—The battle of flowers took place on the Boulevard de la Croisette. My master was still quite excited when he came home in the evening.

"I had not the slightest intention," said he, "of going to the battle of flowers; generally I am not attracted by that sort of amusement. However, I happened to be on the spot to-day with two friends; we took a carriage, and threw ourselves into the heart of the fray. The poor Duc de Chartres! I can't tell you how we persecuted, and literally bombarded him! He did not know where to hide when he saw us coming along! I was infinitely amused, much more so than I had expected. Of course, one must give oneself up to the fun. . . . All the same, there was a cool sea-breeze, which surprised me with so bright a sun."

April 16th.—M. de Maupassant is gone to Antibes to fetch his yacht; a boy has been added to the crew. They don't require me any longer, still I thought myself almost a sailor, since I had sailed from Marseilles to Cannes without passing over the netting or even tumbling down on deck. . . .

On the 18th the *Bel-Ami* sallied forth for an excursion with friends on board . . . coming home towards five. Madame de Maupassant said to me:

"My son's yacht, with her handsome white sails, looks very well on the sea; she is so graceful. . . ."

In the evening, during dinner, my master told his mother about his charming excursion, explaining in detail the qualities of the boat with its new sails, much larger than the former ones, giving the little yacht quite a different sort of motion.

"I really think," said he enthusiastically, "that next year we can cruise about the Moorish coast on this boat thus equipped. . . ."

Villa Continentale, Cannes, April 1888.—I wondered that day what could be the matter with my master. Twice he asked me if Madame had come in.

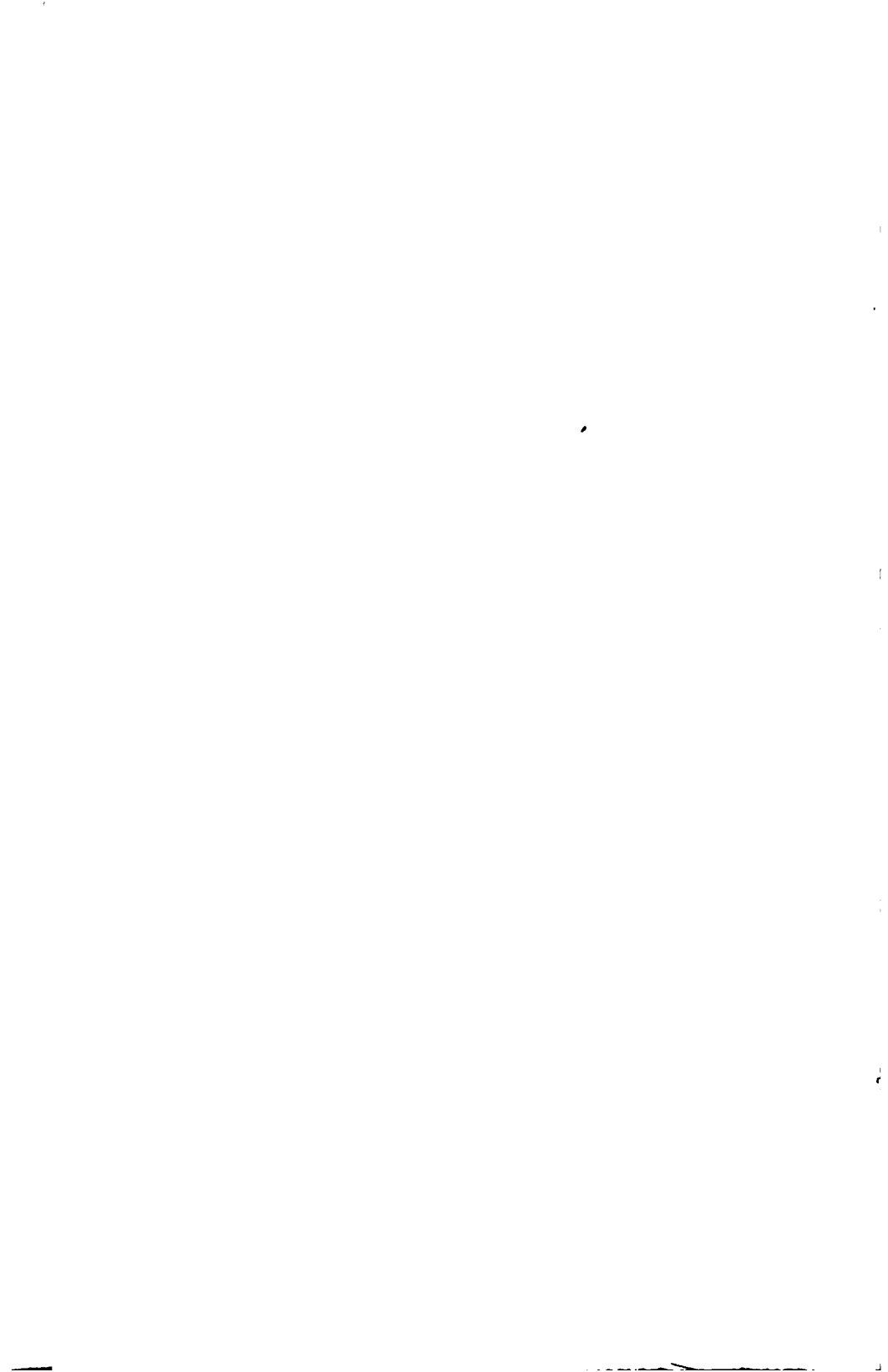
"It is past six o'clock," I answered. "Madame will not be much later, for she hates being out in the dark. . . ."

My master walks from the extremity of the ante-room to the farther end of the drawing-room; there is something he wants to tell his mother. At last she comes, and he hardly allows her time to sit down.

"I have had a pleasant day," says he in a burst of eloquence, "which finished up with a most interesting circumstance. I met General A——, and we walked together towards the Croisette. During that walk he related to me his last charge in 1870, at the head of his squadron. 'We knew,' said he, 'all was lost, and General D—— was convinced of the fact, when he exclaimed: "Now for the honour of the army! . . ."' Then the whole squadron, with the same thought, bounded forward, for the honour of the army of France! I cannot describe what I felt when drawing my sword and giving that order! It was



ALGIERS, 31 OCT., 1890. ON THE ROAD TO THE JARDIN D'ESSAI



a kind of enthusiasm which throws you into a delirious, indescribable state, which gives you an unknown strength of will, superhuman powers. . . . We flew thus till the shock came! . . . then the few of us that remained struck at the adversary with positive fury. And when, almost alone, I no longer found anyone before me, I could only say: "What! it is already over! . . ." It seemed as if the slaughter had only lasted an instant! . . . Alas, it was over, and the few officers still surviving joined me. . . . While telling this the general was deeply moved; all the nerves of his soldier's soul were as highly strung as the chords of a harp sounding its highest note; and, as if giving again the order to charge, he lifted his hand, pointing to the horizon. . . . I was thrilled, while hearing him, by the attitude of this brave general; I had understood, and one day I shall manage to describe the effect produced on the soul of a soldier by these deeds on the field of battle.

"We returned towards the Reserve. The Hesperides' Garden sent up the sweet and delicious perfumes of the large-leaved orange trees, and, in the splendid atmosphere of the dying day, the red setting sun made the gulf blaze like a great lake of blood."

May 16th.—We have returned to Paris, and given several dinner-parties. One day my master told me he intended giving a tea-party to several great ladies of the smart set, whom, as he was a bachelor, he could not invite to dinner. He would also ask some gentlemen.

" You know nothing about that kind of reception," added he ; " however you will do for the best, and I will tell you what to get."

At four o'clock, on the 22nd of May, everyone came to the tea-party. I had burnt quite a variety of perfumes. The samovar was calling the guests by the light sound of steam escaping. . . . I drew aside the hangings separating the drawing-room from the dining-room, and all seated themselves round the table. My master, generally so thoroughly at his ease, seemed rather embarrassed ; the fine ladies were already laughing loudly, and two of them, instead of sitting at table, placed themselves on to a beautiful Renaissance coffer near the window. The one nearest it began to play with the tassel of the curtain, making it swing to and fro ; her neighbour accompanied her by beating a tattoo with her heels on the sides of the coffer, and both laughed so heartily you could see all their white teeth. The ladies round the table joined in. . . .

They were in a state of merriment I could hardly understand ; after all, thought I, notwithstanding their titles, they are but women, and since they have just passed through an ancient door of the Grand Turk's harem turned into a dining-room *portière*, they have perhaps received an electric shock !

At last Princess — and M. Alexander Dumas the younger, the two most important persons of the party, silenced the others, and it was agreed for conversation to be intelligible, that no two people should speak at the same time.

Then M. Dumas cracked a few jokes. Instantly the fun became fast and furious; it was impossible to understand anything. There was again a cry of "Order!" and the Princess then spoke, probably spurred on by something M. Dumas had said; she told a larky anecdote. It was a bachelor's house, why not be merry? . . .

Several of these ladies seemed unable to sit still; they examined every article in the dining-room; one of them drew attention to the majestic attitude of a Gallic cock on an old Rouen plate. Another insisted on knowing every detail about the harem *portière* which closed the dining-room. But my master, questioned, only laughed. . . .

Great was their delight when they discovered a china elephant with its little ones on the mantelpiece, and a pig, a sow and their progeny. Each lady seized upon a piece of china, turned it over, then held it out at arm's length; they insisted on M. de Maupassant's explaining to them the presence in his house of all these articles. . . . And my master tried to satisfy them, but he did not succeed in being heard, for they all chattered at once, each requiring her own separate explanation; they surrounded him, crowding close; really he was taken by siege.

The Princess and M. Dumas never ceased laughing; they went into the drawing-room, followed by the swarm. . . .

When Her Highness departed my master said how much he was flattered by the honour of her visit.

"Yes, yes," said the Princess; "come to me as

often as you like, but as to *my* coming here, no ! I really should be ill ! . . .”

“ I laughed to such a degree yesterday,” said my master the next day, while taking his vapour-bath, “ that my sides are still aching ; I hope to feel better when getting nice and hot ! ”

Then he talked about M. Alexander Dumas, telling me about his first interview with him ; he struck him as being reserved, dry, disinclined to trust anyone, but that did not last long ; they understood each other before the end of the conversation.

“ From that day he was always charming ; he is a first-class writer, and an accomplished man of the world. And how full of fun he is ! Again, no one can come up to him in lively anecdotes and witty repartees.”

May 21st, 1888.—About six in the evening M. de Maupassant sends me with a note to M. Waldeck Rousseau, apologizing for not being able to go and dine with him. He has an awful headache and cannot get rid of it. He told me when I came back that with fatherly kindness M. Waldeck had often advised him to accept the decoration of the Legion of Honour, but he had always declined.

“ Yet,” added he, “ one ought to listen to the sensible advice of an eminent man. When I am dining at his house, I am always on the point of telling him that it is his cook who ought to be decorated, she is certainly the very best cook in Paris. I have nowhere met with anything approaching the delicacy of her cooking.”

It is the month of June. M. de Maupassant wishes to take baths at Aix-les-Bains before going to Étretat.

He was dressing one evening to go out to dinner, and told me he was going to fight a duel next day ; he seemed as cool as usual, but showed his firm intention of chastising an impudent fellow, " who had dared," said he, " to allude to a married lady in a newspaper article. . . ."

" They may say what they like," he declared, " about my writings, but don't let them dare allude to my private life, for I shall take it up. As I am the offended party, I insist on a duel with pistols at twenty paces, to continue till one of the adversaries be disabled. And, I can assure you, that with a good pistol I shall soon have stroked my opponent's skin !

" I went this afternoon to Gastine Renette's shooting-gallery. I shot seventeen times, and sixteen of the bullets caught the dummy in the chest. The attendant then said to me : ' Sir, you are evidently practising because you are about to fight, but really it is not necessary. If, with your skill, you have a good pistol, well ! I pity the man who will stand up against you.' "

My master came home at eleven. I was waiting for him, though he had not told me to do so, always hoping some incident would prevent the duel. . . . He seemed surprised when he saw me in the dining-room.

" You are there, are you, François ? Well, you can go to bed ; we have made it up ; I am not going to fight. . . ."

M. de Maupassant received a charming note from M. Gounod, asking him again (he had already done so when they had met at a friend's house) to write him a piece of poetry he could set to music.

"Perhaps I ought to do so," exclaimed my master, "he is such a splendid composer!"

In our dwelling at Aix-les-Bains, my master and his mother lunch in a small room on the ground floor, fitted up as a dining-room. There is an Empire chest of drawers, with fine brass ornaments, which does duty as a dresser; the sideboard is a Regency console with the beautiful gilding of that period.

The large glass door, which is also the window, remains wide open. My master sits opposite; in front of him is a splendid bed of scarlet geraniums bordered with different-coloured plants, and another bed of roses and shrubs with variegated leaves—white and purple. These flowers picked out with greenery made the garden very gay; one could fancy the little dining-room had been made for this charming frame.

My master seems so happy to be alone with his mother! They talk rather loudly, as is their habit when alone together; each of them is aware the other is extremely intelligent, they trust each other completely; but they love discussion, and almost always finish by being both of the same opinion.

To-day the chief subject of their conversation is the great affection that fills their hearts; they are so happy that I am deeply impressed by it. Maternal love is such a noble feeling! It made me think of

my dear mother, whom, alas ! I do not see very often, and this touching picture of master with his mother gave me the fond wish of rushing off to see mine, to embrace her, and tell her I should never leave her again !

My master related to his mother his ascent of the *Dent-du-Chat*, in company with one of those dauntless Englishwomen one meets with everywhere.

"As we slipped a good deal," said he, "we had to use our hands as hooks ; it was rather amusing. . . ."

Did M. de Maupassant see that I looked somewhat melancholy ? Very possibly, for nothing escaped his sharp eye. He asked me if I had already walked up the Renard. I answered that I had not.

"But you must see it," said he. "I am going there this afternoon ; if you like to come too, I will take you with me."

"Yes, sir, I will come, but on one condition : that I shall not be obliged to follow you, sir, when the hill becomes very steep."

"Very well, be ready at half-past two, I will put you on the road, then I shall pay a visit to my doctor. During that time, you will have taken a good start ahead of me."

All went well, my master joined me just as I was taking the last turn towards the top of the hill. Then we walked in the direction of Mont Blanc, which we could see before us, as well as other Italian and Swiss mountains.

"We shall return this way," said he, turning to the

right, then showing me the site where lay Chamonix, behind great slopes.

"You cannot imagine," he said, "how beautiful this part of Switzerland is when you follow the mountains and the lakes up to Monte Rosa in Italy. I took that journey many years ago, and am acquainted with the whole region. Indeed, it is there that Fate decided about my life, and made a bachelor of me. I made the excursion in the society of a numerous family; she who was to have been my wife was among the tourists, and, how I know not, by some unforeseen circumstance, another woman, a foreigner, slipped in amongst us. That was a death-blow to my intended marriage. . . . For unfortunately (it is frequently so in this miserable life) the honest woman is often the dupe of the designing one. . . . Sometimes I ask myself whether my happiness would not have been ensured by this projected marriage, for I knew the young lady well; she was high-minded, generous, and with broad views, full of information; life at her side would have been agreeable, and she possessed all the qualities which would have enabled her to second me in my work. . . . But Fate! . . ."

After a pause my master began to describe to me all the mountains on the other side of the small Bourget lake. He stopped suddenly.

"Now I recollect I must go to Marlioz. I will start now. You had better return home by the same way you came."

This is the last week of our stay at Aix. M. de

Maupassant asks if I have been to the Villa des Fleurs.

"No, sir."

"Well, you must go, here are some tickets; now do you take notice of all you see: the women, the gambling, the 'horse-racing game,' the comings and goings of the public, and the whole organization of the establishment."

I thanked him, and retired into the kitchen, whence I heard my master talking to his mother.

"You understand, mother," he was saying, "François, by those few evenings he is about to spend at the Villa des Fleurs, may some day be of use to me, for he has an excellent memory, sees things as they are, and knows how to describe them."

Two days before our departure my master gave his mother's maid some tickets for the Club Theatre. They were playing *François les Bas Bleus*; most of the actors belonged to the Paris Opera Comique; we went, and spent a very pleasant evening.

We are back in Paris; an English nobleman is a guest at my master's table. I must return to the past, to explain his presence.

During 1886 my master was often invited to lunch by a titled lady who lived near the Parc Monceau; he went there again the following spring. His place at table was always reserved for him, but he was very discreet. For, notwithstanding all the kind attentions lavished on him, and which pleased him, he used to tell me that life among the smart people bored him intensely.

It was during one of these luncheons he became acquainted with the nobleman I have mentioned. How he managed to captivate master, I never knew. Anyhow, they became fast friends, and my master invited him to Étretat. He spent ten days there in the summer, with his valet; they lived in a large villa belonging to Madame de Maupassant, much more comfortable than La Guillette.

My master, during the first morning, showed him the beach with its large pebbles, and *Les Aiguilles*. In the afternoon his intimate friends came, and they played bowls. The English nobleman joined in, and played well, only he did not know how to pick the bowls up from the ground, he was tall, and at his age the spine is no longer very supple. Madame R——, always amiable and flexible as a willow, hurried to pick up the bowls, which she gave him, saying quite seriously, and without any attempt at quizzing:

“Here, my lord.”

In the evening, there was a dinner-party at the Verguies, followed by music, and next day an excursion to the Val d'Antifer, and lunch at “La Belle Ernestine's,” at Saint Joint. Ah, many are the celebrities who went to admire the “Belle Ernestine's” grandfather clocks of the good old times, when the apples furnished as much brandy as cider!

In the evening they played the handkerchief game. At first Lord —— was somewhat surprised at this game, but he soon understood it; it was much more amusing than the music, always the same that he had been listening to for the last sixty years. . . .

One day M. de Maupassant drove out with Lord —.

“How strange!” I thought. “No ladies?”

Two days after, as I was giving my master his shower bath, he told me about the drive.

“I went to see the Monastery of Benedictines at Fécamp with Lord —. He wished also to see the *Maison Tellier*, which is situated in reality at Rouen, but I had my reasons for transporting the story to Fécamp. I showed Lord — a house at Fécamp, and he recognized it by the description in my tale . . . it was very funny. . . .”

After ten days of this quiet, wholesome sort of life, during which this nobleman had been entertained by childish games, he was quite transformed. He was obliged to leave, on business, and he would dearly have liked to remain. He loved this circle of people, apparently so simple, but so artistic, so witty and so full of inexhaustible fun!

“It is heaven on earth,” said his valet to me, “I’ve been fifteen years with My Lord, and have never seen him for so long in a good humour!”

But they had to go away.

“It’s lucky for that nobleman that he *is* a Lord,” thought I. “Of course he has been spared on account of the great respect they bear to his title! Still, how is it possible he has spent ten days here without a single trick being played on him!”

Hitherto no such fact had been recorded at La Guillette.

During the following autumn, my master informed

me Lord — was coming to dinner with **some** literary celebrities.

"We shall only be four," added he; "you **will** cook but few dishes, but give us good things."

On the evening for the dinner-party Lord — came in a smoking jacket; he wore an English cravat passed through a gold and diamond ring. . . . I ushered him into the drawing-room where my master was awaiting him with the two "literary celebrities," in reality the two very handsome ladies who had dined a few years previously with the Condorcet school-boy.¹

Of course I did not see the face of the Englishman at that moment, but at table, he was most courteous, and the dinner was very gay. The two ladies, who had belonged to the stage, and now were occupied with literature, knew England very well, and, helped by their natural flow of language, and their choice expressions from the Parisian stage, could describe excellently the beauties of the British Isles and the qualities of the inhabitants.

When Lord — took his leave, his shaven face showed how much he had enjoyed the grace and charm of French literature!

November 12th.—Here we are at Cannes. On the 14th, we were advised of the arrival of furniture coming from one of Madame de Maupassant's villas; her son had had it packed at Étretat. I went to fetch it at the Rocca station, and had it taken to a villa, quite close to ours, where an apartment is being prepared for Madame.

¹ See Chapter III.

Then my master took into his bachelor abode several old pieces of furniture belonging to Madame. Some are beautiful : an Empire bedstead with finely chiselled brass ornaments, a Louis the Sixteenth table which he uses as his bureau, then a tiny writing desk of the same period, only five feet high and a foot and a half broad ; it is composed of small secret drawers. Sometimes my master opens it and writes his letters on it. He has also a chiffonier with many drawers, containing cravats, gloves, etc., in great order.

A clock with green marble columns is placed on the mantel-piece ; it is of the seventeenth century and is of great beauty, the shape is very elegant. I must also mention a Dutch chest, a Norman cupboard, and a few fancy articles ; luckily the flat is spacious, for really we have enough to furnish it with.

Before settling where these things are to remain, my master frequently alters their position, the smaller pieces of furniture, in which he has classed his letters, his newspapers and his books, are moveable, but that gigantic Dutch chest is awfully heavy. Never mind, it must dance about like the others ! It is such fun for my master ! That morning, as we were very hard at work, he told me what he should prefer.

" If I were rich," said he, " I should have a large house in a pretty but retired spot ; I would fill it with all kinds of pretty things, of rare articles that would please me ; I should never be tired of looking at them. My ideal would be to live in perfect quiet, to spend my days contemplating things that please

me, far from that worldly turmoil that tires me so, that I am obliged to follow, and which I loathe."

The next day, I rubbed all this furniture with a solution of sublimate so as to destroy an almost invisible insect that gnawed it ; after which wax and a brush had their turn.

Fort comme la Mort gets on well ; it is to be finished on January 15th, so as to appear in a newspaper ; and in the spring, it is to be published in book form. My master says he is sure it will succeed ; still Madame is dissatisfied with the ending.

End of December.—The *Bel Ami* is in Cannes harbour ; my master often goes for a sail.

There are already many visitors at Cannes, and always numerous Princes and Princesses. Yesterday a Duke came to see us. I did not know this man. . . . I received him politely, but treated him like everybody else. . . . In the evening, when I gave my master his card, he asked me how I had addressed him.

"Of course, I said 'Sir.' . . ."

Then he told me in future to call him "Monseigneur" and to address in the same way all the Dukes and Princes. I promised to do what I could to obey his injunctions, and I was quite sincere. But my unfortunate disposition was rebellious ; to me, all these grand people were merely "sir" and "madame," and I had to take care to manage to articulate : "Monseigneur." I always made a slip of the tongue, notwithstanding my good intentions.

It is the first of the year. My master dines out again at a Princess's. . . . His mother dines at home

with a friend. Their conversation turns on the small value of titles. I took advantage of the circumstance to tell Madame how badly educated I was on this point, and of my awkwardness, confessing to her that though I had tried my best, still I made mistakes, on the yacht and at home. Madame thinks I shall manage better, since I do try. She finished by saying that she understood me, though she did not approve of me, and perhaps might do the same. . . . The ladies were much amused by some anecdotes on titles which I told them.

On January the 22nd.—My master gave a large dinner-party, inviting the aristocratic society residing at Cannes. The ladies are much more numerous than the men. Madame de Maupassant was present as well as a very intelligent little lady, the same one that had acted as a somnambulist and predicted the future to some great ladies at a party master gave at Étretat.

The dinner is already far advanced; all these ladies, who at their own houses, scarcely eat a morsel, here show excellent appetites; they honoured every dish with their attention, not one escaped. My master noticed it, and I read on his face great satisfaction and a certain pride. Here the cookery is not that of a professional, but great care is taken; no routine, but new attempts which succeed happily, and my master is pleased, not only for himself, but above all for his guests. They hardly ever leave without praising the good things they have enjoyed.

All the ladies were acquainted with each other,

excepting the intelligent little lady, who belongs to a lower set. She speaks but little, noticing everything. She does not lose a gesture of these great ladies, she listens to them, with undisguised attention ; the conversation is commonplace, still literature is alluded to. No one dares say much on this subject, probably on account of the presence of an author. This is a mistake, as my master is never jealous of praise bestowed on a brother-writer ; indeed, he is always pleased to hear people speak well of other men's work.

One of the gentlemen told the tale of what happened during a cruise on the coast of Greece. All the passengers landed so as to go shooting in a picturesque green wood, expecting to find game of a kind they were perhaps unacquainted with. Hardly had they walked for a few minutes in untrodden paths, when they perceived they were followed, then surrounded by men in tatters, who looked like savages who might be difficult to deal with. They were bandits who did not disguise their intentions ; if the travellers did not give up money and valuables, they would be fired at !

" We might," said the story-teller, " have tried to resist, since we were armed ; but we thought it wiser to submit, and empty our purses in the hands of those robbers, instead of proceeding to extremities which might have been dangerous. But how relieved we were to get back on board our vessel ! We were cured of the idea of landing."

My master listened most attentively, since he fully

intended cruising about the coasts of Morocco on his *Bel Ami*.

Greece had been alluded to ; one of the great ladies, who had some knowledge of dead languages, turned the conversation on to that subject. She little thought she was seated next a lady (Madame de Maupassant) who was a complete mistress of those tongues. There was a discussion on the formation of some French words of Latin origin, with Greek roots. But the great lady did not go very far, as Madame de Maupassant gave her the dates, the author's names, and told of the documents on which the changes of these words from one language to the other, had been inscribed, with such precision that everyone was surprised.

It would have taken all the knowledge of the most celebrated professor to give a lesson to Madame de Maupassant, who, without appearing to attach any importance to such things, knew all about languages ; she spoke them with such consummate ease, she might just as well have been born on the shores of the Thames, as on those of the Tiber.

She was well known among the great polyglot professors, and none of those who came to the Riviera failed to pay a visit to Madame de Maupassant. She loved seclusion and quiet, and only mingled with society just as much as was necessary to please her son ; but she received learned men, scholars, men of letters with the greatest delight.

One day, when I announced to her the arrival of an English couple : Dr X—— and his wife, her

enthusiasm knew no bounds. She hastened to smooth her white hair with a tiny comb, and without taking her dressing-gown off, rushed to meet her friends, who were both most learned people. Conversation began briskly, there were none of the usual polite commonplace sentences, and from two till seven in the evening, it was a dialogue of lecturers, only stopping for Mrs X—— to take her tea, and the Doctor his glasses of water. During the afternoon he absorbed the contents of three water-bottles. Madame de Maupassant, who does not drink, told me laughing, that she observed this feat, without a draught, like a certain animal when crossing the desert.

In the evening, at dinner, Madame, still under the influence of this charming day, recounted to her son all she could recollect of the delightful conversation. She bent towards him, as if thus she could the better make him understand; her attitude is exactly that of a mother speaking to her child, her voice occasionally scans the words, and her intonation is louder or softer according to what she says. One feels her heart is in it; the mother and the professor united in one, speak to my master. He listens scrupulously, uttering occasionally a word or two, for he knows that on a day like this, it is not for him to speak, and that he has a great deal more to gain by listening.

My master has suffered from headaches; during several nights he has been unable to sleep; which has allowed him to find out that in the passage extending from one end to the other of the flat above ours, someone walks day and night, without stopping for

one single instant. That apartment is occupied by three Englishwomen ; my master supposes they have taken a vow to some British saint, and that to keep this vow, one of them must always be walking. For several days we paid special attention, but we never could catch them, for they never stopped ; evidently they were descendants of the Wandering Jew.

End of January.—M. de Maupassant has finished his novel ; now he gives himself up to taking the ladies for a sail on his yacht. One day he took them to lunch at a little inn at Agay. I was not of the party.

"François," said my master a few days afterwards ; "you must come on board this afternoon to serve tea, because Bernard often has to attend to the boat."

There were a good many guests, I only appeared on deck to serve tea, cakes and the simple glass of sugared water. However, towards evening I put my head out of the trap which was in reality the kitchen door, because it seemed to me it was time to return home and that we should have no breeze. Hardly had I taken up this position, rather akin to that of a man about to be guillotined since I was up to my throat in this species of circular hole, when I was hit in the face by a wave, which knocked my head against the edge of the trap door.

At the same time, I heard shrieks proceeding from the deck ; this tremendous billow had covered the boat, inundating all the ladies. Their dresses, which were most expensive, were completely spoilt, all the napkins and handkerchiefs on board were taken to try and repair the disaster, which of course was only

increased, because the more we rubbed, the more the colours got mixed up. Nothing could be done ; all was lost. No one could explain why the sea acted so treacherously, just at the moment when Bernard was at the helm. The order to return home was given immediately.

Later on, the inundation was explained. It was time to get home, but on account of the wish expressed by one of the ladies, we were still going out to sea, so Bernard, with a view of getting my master to return to Cannes, allowed the deck of the *Bel Ami* to be well soused in three feet of water. He swore he had been quite surprised by the event ; people thought what they liked, I certainly can safely say it is the only time such an accident befel him.

My master rose later than usual the day after the sail. While I served his tea, he seemed to me but half awake, as if he had not got over the submersion by that wave. While walking to and fro in the drawing-room, he told me he still failed to understand Bernard's mistake.

" Did you look at the Princess," added he, " while she lay on the deck ? She took up half the length of the *Bel Ami*. . . . I like the mind of the Princess, merry, subtle, with occasionally magnificent flights of imagination. Some day I will tell you her story. This morning, I remained in bed an hour later than usual, I was making out the tale I shall write to-day."

We are at the beginning of March, vegetation is already far advanced, the gardens are full of flowers of all kinds, the balconies also are lined with them,

and the atmosphere is one perfume. Some of the walls, on the road to Fréjus, are hung with roses and different flowery creepers. It is an enchanting sight ; there are spots where one might suppose triumphal arches had been built for the reception of some prince-Charming who intended to reside in the midst of these immense beds of flowers and greenery.

One day, as M. de Maupassant was taking a walk in that direction, he resolved to invite his friends for a sail on the *Bel Ami* to St Honorat, where, said he, vegetation must be very far advanced.

Two days after, towards two in the afternoon, in very fine weather, the *Bel Ami* with every sail spread, was cruising to the Iles de Lerins. My master kindly took me with him. We returned quietly, there was no animation. In the evening my master described to his mother the magnificent view to be seen from the promontory, and the ladies' enthusiasm, but he remained silent about his visit to the cloisters. . . .

M. Riou, the painter, came to spend the day on board the *Bel Ami*. Madame de Maupassant consented to accompany her son during this excursion. My master is delighted, he is very fond of M. Riou and appreciates his talent ; he wants to ask him to paint a picture of the *Bel Ami*.

" Riou is a master," said M. de Maupassant to me during dinner, "*The Arrival of Napoleon III. in Egypt* and *The Inauguration of the Suez Canal* are two of his pictures. . . . He is a very great artist ! "

March 10th.—We have returned to Paris. On the 16th *Fort Comme la Mort* will be published. All goes

well ; my master is satisfied, he thinks that as it is spring there will be a good sale of the novel on the book stalls, and his new publisher has a more extensive connection than the old one had.

On the day of publication, my master goes to the publishers to sign the dedications on the copies he gives his friends.

" There are a considerable number," he says, " and a great variety of dedications. I like to accomplish all that on the spot, and also to send the volumes directly from the publisher's, excepting for some of my intimate friends, who will get choice copies, on Dutch or Japanese paper."

The publication of this novel was a triumph for my master, but brought him such a large amount of young writers' visits that at last he began to complain.

" But they tire me to death ! I want the mornings for my work, and really they are becoming too numerous ! Henceforth, I will only receive them by appointment. Of course I like to be of use to them ; but very often, what I tell them does no good. Now, that young fellow who has just left me ; it is a waste of time to give him good advice : he is so dissipated. He never thinks about his work, and yet imagines he will become a novel-writer ! It is impossible, impossible ! You understand, in order to write a novel, you must think of it constantly, all the characters must be in their proper places, everything must be settled before you begin writing the first pages, otherwise you must begin every day all over again. Then there is a muddle, from which you can never

come out successfully. It is not the work of one day, even for a practised writer, let alone for a beginner."

One day a messenger brought a large parcel for M. de Maupassant. It was most carefully packed, with a strict recommendation to give it "specially to him." The man wished to wait, but as I gave him a good gratuity, he did not insist, and went off. Luckily for him; as my master only came in at eight for dinner. We unpacked the parcel, first there was a stout paper, then stiff wooden boards and a series of tiny boxes, each containing a beautiful little doll about four inches high. There were twenty-four in all. Six were dressed like smart ladies with long trains; six others as nuns, all in black with white coifs; they were less attractive in their black drapery than the smart ladies, and they looked quite austere; six wore the Dominican religious habit, which is entirely white; they were really charming; the last half-dozen were widows, dressed in crape with long veils.

They were all placed in a line on the dining-room table, and my master sat down to his meal. Inquisitive Pussy wanted to jump on to the table, so as to inspect these playthings, but we were afraid she would hit them with her paw.

As to Jacquot, the parrot, when he saw the pretty decoration formed by these exquisite little dolls, he left his perch to come and examine them quite closely, curiosity being one of his attributes. My master allowed him to remain a short time on the table. He was a most amusing parrot, he turned to the right, then to the left, talking away all the time; then he

gave himself most important airs ; bowed as gracefully as he knew how ; at last he showed his preference for the smart ladies. They were highly perfumed, and he loved scents, he paid them too much attention and tried to manifest his admiration by pecks which might have harmed them. He had to be taken away, protesting in his own peculiar fashion ; but we did not listen to him.

My master, in the evening, asked for some old handkerchiefs. We tore them into shreds, and with a bodkin, he introduced these tiny rags under the clothes of the dolls dressed as widows ; they immediately looked much stouter. . . . Then they were replaced in their boxes, the parcel was made up again, and next morning, the lady who had sent it received the packet, and was made to understand that widows were more . . . prosperous . . . than she had wished to make my master believe. . . .

My master is going to a large party. He 'twists his opera hat round and round.

"It is quite worn," says he at last, examining it well, "and thoroughly out of fashion. I must order another, for excepting for my soft felts, I am always obliged to be measured. My head is so round that I never can find a ready-made hat. The reason my brother and myself have these perfectly round heads, is explained by a fact my mother has told me. The old doctor who was present at our birth, immediately took us between his knees, and vigorously massaged our heads, finishing by the gesture of the potter rounding his pot by a stroke of the thumb. He then



ALGIER, NOV., 1890. THE HARBOUR AND EAST PIER, FROM THE HOTEL D'EUROPE

said to Mother : ' You see, madame, I have made him a head round as an apple, which, be sure, will later on give him a most active brain, and intelligence of first-class order.'

" He did the same with my poor brother, but whether the six years between us had weakened the doctor's hands, or whether he was not in such good form, he never succeeded in giving that small head the shape he wished. It slipped, constantly escaping him, and he was so provoked he actually swore in a big Norman oath ! . . . Sometimes I ask myself if really it is on account of the doctor's massage of my young brain that I now can accomplish with such ease so much more than the average quantity of work."

CHAPTER XII

APRIL—AUGUST 1889

At Poissy—François has known Flaubert—*Madame Bovary* in the pantry—Zola and de Maupassant—*The Rougon-Macquarts* judged by a truthful man-servant—*Pot Bouille* is an unfair accusation—A parallel drawn by Maupassant between Zola and Flaubert—Arabian dances rue Montchanin—Sojourn at Triel—A meal at the restaurant—Maupassant tells of his struggle against ferocious dogs—Saving a woman's life in the night—The engineer's wife—Why not have a medal?—Passing before Médan—Messrs Zola and H. Pessard lunch at our house—Super-nourishment ordered by Dr Grubby—Merry excursion on a steamer—A dinner-party on the water—A page of the Decameron—We return to Étretat—*Noire Cour*—Symptoms of over-fatigue—Fear of spiders.

PARIS, end of April 1889—This year, the sun shines brilliantly in Paris. Yesterday my master suffered from headache, and to-day, his eyes are red. He does not complain, he can stand pain, he only takes a little ether or antipyrine to combat these awful headaches. What he does regret, is being unable to work for days, for he needs complete rest after these attacks. Then I prepare very light food for him; his digestion, says he, is troubling him much. Perhaps his nerves cause all this suffering.

He does not like his apartment, the incessant noise of vehicles passing over the stone pavement tires him. It looks out on a bit of waste land, bathed in the sun,

but enclosed within boards painted black. This view seems to him a nonsensical kind of thing that ought not to exist. So as to hide this sunny horror, my master puts up some green cloth blinds. They may be good for the sight! but they make the apartment so dark, so depressing! I am obliged to grope about to find anything that may be wanted, and I am always afraid of breaking some article! . . . My master is so bored in this house that he decides on taking up boating again.

"To-morrow, François," says he, "I shall take you to Poissy where I have sent my boats; for at Chatou, I could not stand the neighbourhood, packed with adventuresses. I am sorry for Alphonse and Madame Papillon, who have always been so nice to me, and who took such care of my boats. You must become acquainted with the landlord of the *Hotel de l'Esturgeon*, and also with the keeper of my boats."

He rang me up at eight in the morning.

"Are you ready, François?" said he, "for we must catch the first train, so as to reach the hotel in time for lunch."

And we started. . . . As soon as my master arrived at Poissy, he called on the keeper of his boats, begging him to come immediately and see what would have to be done, so as to have everything ready in a fortnight. He ordered lunch when we passed before the hotel.

My master when at the dock gave lengthy directions to the keeper, then sent me to fetch a shipwright who

would see to painting the boats. Everything being settled, we went in for lunch.

"Really," said he, "I did well to take you with me, those people are not very intelligent; and you or I shall have to come here, occasionally. . . ."

He consulted his railway-guide immediately after lunch.

"Now we have no direct train," said he, "and I can't do my boating, nothing is ready. . . . Well, I will run off to Villennes; if you like to accompany me, you will learn to know the country-side, which will be useful, should you have to go there later on."

We start; we pass the avenues which from Poissy, skirt the river, we find ourselves in small meadows planted with clusters of trees; on the left, beyond the railway, we suddenly see a white château in a beautiful situation. Here, we take a most picturesque path; my master walks in front, as there is only room for one person at a time.

"How beautiful," he exclaims, "is Nature in full bloom!"

The path, running along a slope covered with grass and mosses, was wonderfully pretty; in the fields, on the hills, the cherry-trees were all in blossom; to the right, gigantic brambles were climbing up the trees; along the Seine, tall poplars sent their tops towards the sky. . . . When we reached a spot where the path became wider, we found another descending towards the Seine; my master stopped, and turned towards the underwood.

"This opening," said he, "recalls Flaubert to my

mind. . . . By the by, François, don't let me forget that next Thursday our committee for the monument to Flaubert meets at Rouen. It is written down in my pocket-book, but two heads are better than one. Did not you tell me you had known him ? . . ."

"Yes, sir, I had the great honour to wait at table on M. Flaubert, in 1876 and 1877 at Madame de T——'s, whose house, in the rue Murillo, adjoined that of M. Flaubert. My recollections are the more distinct because of my extreme surprise when the butler, showing me M. Flaubert, spoke as follows :—

" ' You see that gentleman ? He is always to be served first, even before the ladies.'

"He sat on the right of the mistress of the house ; on the left was Claudius Popelin.

" ' This is done,' continued the butler, ' because that gentleman is a most distinguished genius, and a most remarkable writer. I will lend you one of his books ; you will thus be able to judge for yourself.'

"And he lent me *Madame Bovary*, which I read first by myself. The book made a tremendous impression on me ; it seemed to me so striking, so true to life, that during several evenings I read it aloud in the kitchen to the servants. There were discussions between the maids on the subject of Madame Bovary's first ride with her landed neighbour, and they were still more excited when I read them the passage where one morning Madame Bovary, returning from the château, has a struggle before the hut with the poacher.

" ' If I had been Madame Bovary,' said the English

maid, 'I should have gone into the hut, pretended I was fond of him, turned his head, got hold of his gun, and killed him! Then he could not have told the country-people he had seen me coming back from the château!'

"As far as I am concerned, sir, I must confess that for a long time I used to dream about the apothecary. From the kitchen window, one could see right into M. Flaubert's dining-room. After I had read *Madame Bovary* aloud, this window was always occupied by one or two of the maids, trying to see the author of the splendid book. One would say: 'I have seen a corner of his dressing-gown,' another: 'I have just caught sight of his bald head.' A third would add, 'I have seen his long locks of hair falling on to his back.'"

My master listened to my gossip, quite happy to hear me, in my simple language, talking of M. Flaubert, whom he was so fond of. . . . We were just beneath the celebrated Sophora-tree of Villennes; a restaurant and all kinds of games have been established under its gigantic branches. My master offered me refreshments, but I declined them.

"Come here," said he, "we will cross the railway and I will show you the wharf in case we should have to make use of it some day. . . ."

From the wharf, he showed me the Triel bridge in the distance.

After recrossing the railway, and turning to the right, we followed a path skirting an old church half-concealed by budding foliage, then we reached the

high road on the top of the hill. There, the panorama was magnificent.

M. de Maupassant stopped to contemplate it.

"See, François," said he, "how grand is that splendid view! And that immense plain! Opposite stands the forest of St Germain; more to the left the chain of Cheverchemont; lower down Triel and Vaux; Meulan; in the valley Mantes-la-Jolie, towards which flows the lovely river, beautified by all the islands. You must also know this road takes you to Médan, to M. Zola's house. Probably I shall have to send you there. Now, on this side, we shall pass through the woods, I know them well, we shall not be lost, don't fear. . . . That Zola is a first-class writer. . . . Have you read any of his books?"

"Yes, sir, but not many, only the *Rougon-Macquart* series."

"Well?"

"Sir, I don't know what to say, it is literature, which, of course, I do not understand. . . ."

"But you know well how to cook," says my master, "one can't know everything. Still, you did read the *Rougon-Macquart* series?"

"Yes, sir; and since you really wish to know what I think of those books, I will tell you. M. Zola exaggerates terribly when talking about servants; he puts all sorts of horrors in the mouths of the maids; in *Pot-Bouille*, he makes them scream the nastiest expressions out of the courtyard windows. I repeat, sir, all this is exaggerated. Twenty-five years have I been a servant, and I have never heard speeches

bordering in any way on those M. Zola puts into the mouths of his characters. Then that fellow Trublots, I dare say such people exist, but they are exceedingly rare—I don't say maids and cooks have not their feelings, like other women. . . . No, but to state they are all of them ready to hide Trublots in their kitchens, while awaiting the instant when they can lead them up to their garrets, no, sir, no !

“ M. Zola sought his documents on the very lowest rung of the ladder ; I wonder where he got them. It is not fair to attack defenceless beings, who are often very interesting. How many times during the day does a poor maid-servant trample on her own self-respect, so as to keep her place and remain an honest girl ! And that, so as at the end of the month, she may pocket thirty francs, out of which she buys what she cannot do without, sending the rest to her old father and mother, who still are obliged to support young children and are often helpless on account of their infirmities !

“ I should have thought it more praiseworthy if M. Zola had set forth the honesty, the devotion of servants, the trials they have to go through ; for in most of the houses where they go to service, they must possess no individuality, they must efface themselves ; if humiliated, they must not show it. We often work very hard, without consolation or encouragement, for we are separated from our relations ; these and many other details might have been a better subject for the studies of M. Zola, and would have been more truthful than the disgusting events he tells about,

Zola and which he has certainly invented, since he never could have seen what he describes. It does not exist, and I am not alone in thinking a man's thoughts must be evil and unwholesome when his brain creates those loathsome things which, I repeat it, have never existed."

I was terribly excited ; M. de Maupassant smiled, occasionally shaking his head, and striking the ground with his cane.

" Pray, François," he said at last, " do believe that Zola did not wish to attack those honest girls you talk about. He only wished to show the bad side of that class of society. His work is good, but, as he always does, he goes in for a striking effect so as to ensure a good sale. If he had written in the sense you advocate, he would not have sold a single volume, whereas owing to what he did do, all the depraved people will rush after his books, like dogs on their quarry ; and money, all that he cares for, will simply pour down on him. That is, I think, a mistake, for when an artist does his best, he ought to think only of his work, and be absolutely disinterested.

" Now, look at Flaubert, whom we were speaking of, he is the one who knew the best how to make the French language yield all its grace and harmony. What patience he had, how disinterested he was ! Like so many others, he might have published novels and earned an income thereby ; he preferred following his artistic vocation and shutting himself up for fifteen years, so as to write *Salammbô* !

" Later on, in a hundred years, after two centuries,

perhaps, when Society will have undergone frightful convulsions, when the true Republic shall have found its path, when first-class artists and authors shall have sprung from the new and wiser generations, be sure that most of the writers of this century will be forgotten, while the beauteous work of Flaubert will shine all the more. All intelligent people will want to read it, because they will understand all they can gather from such a noble, such a powerful masterpiece ! ”

My master pronounced these last words in a most emphatic tone ; by his gesture, he seemed to launch them forth into space. . . .

We had walked through the wood, a village and a large part of the plain ; my master consulted his watch.

“ It is 4-25 o'clock,” said he, “ we have still thirty minutes for our walk to the station, which is about two miles and a half distant. It can be done—François, let us be off.”

And, holding his cane in his right hand, he started at his best pace.

When we reached the station, we walked about, so as not to take cold, for, of course, we were rather heated. My master showed me a house entirely covered by wisteria and ivy.

“ That,” said he, “ is where the great painter, M. Meissonnier, lives all the summer. . . . ”

Rue Montchanin, April 25th 1889, nine in the morning.—M. de Maupassant is standing by the mantel-piece in his room. He is building up piles of gold coins.

"You see, I won all this last night. It is a pretty sum, but I do not intend to keep a penny of it. This afternoon, I shall go to the Charitable Board. I do not know why those society people oblige me to play. Yesterday, we all met at my friend X——'s, you know, the barrister who lunched here with me last year. The ladies were in a majority that evening. As they begged me to play, I had to consent; however, I told them they were wrong, since most of their savings would go to the poor. . . .

"I do not understand the aversion I feel for gambling, since I love witty games and all that has to do with any physical exercise. . . ."

In the first days of May 1889, my master invited to the rue Montchanin an Arabian company, fresh from Algiers, and about to perform at the Exhibition. He seized this opportunity of offering some chosen friends the first fruits of the skill of these very original African artists.

One of the women, when she came in, threw herself into my arms, saying most amiable things.

"Oh! I recollect you well," she said. "You came to Algiers, I know you, oh, yes, yes!"

And she went on kissing me, which embarrassed me extremely, while my master laughed most heartily.

"Very likely madame did see you at Algiers," he said, "since you have been there."

Encouraged by these words, the young lady would not let me go. I must say she was very pretty with her dark, rounded face, her velvety eyes. But certainly when she pressed me to her hot bosom,

decorated with a sequin necklace making a metallic noise at her every movement, I thought her anything but attractive. There were twelve women and four men, besides their impresario.

They seemed quite embarrassed in the drawing-room, wheeling about, tripping themselves up in the carpets and in their dresses, which are very long in front as well as behind, and so ample one might have supposed they wore crinolines. When the presentations were finished, their guide made them sit down in a circle, and they began their musical boom-booming, chaunting and screaming. When the first piece was over, they were sent into the dining-room to partake of champagne and cakes.

This good French wine was offered them as being a special beverage made up for them, since Mahomet forbade their tasting wine, and they would not disobey him. After each dance or piece of music, they were always refreshed by a glass or two of champagne.

Now, they all, even the old ones, wished to execute the *danse du ventre*. It became a species of demoniacal revel, each vied with the other in producing the most extraordinary contortions. It really was not interesting, we were too close; the actors were having much more fun than the spectators. My master, accompanied by one of his guests, would leave the drawing-room, and walk through his room to the conservatory, his hands in his pockets, just as he does when he walks alone about the apartment, struggling to put into shape a sentence he is not satisfied with.

The leader did all he could to re-establish order among his people. Some of the ladies are on the divans and the settees, leaning on the cushions ; others are on the ground, seated on the white bearskin or on the carpets. The musicians try to tune their instruments, indeed they succeed in playing a last piece. But, oh, what jarring sounds ! Everyone played as he pleased, I can't describe the curious effect of all those people in different costumes, tossing about in a most unruly way ; it was like a meeting of animated dolls. The last time they had refreshments, I only gave them orangeade. At last, they had to take leave. The guide, when it came to organising the departure, was obliged to show great resolution. It was a long affair, there was always someone who was not ready, for all had lost some important part of their costume. Of course, my little dancing-girl made a point of saying good-bye to me, for she persisted in taking me for a guest, because I wore a tail-coat and a white cravat !

There were four carriages at the door ; the Arabs soon clambered in. I do not know if the guide made a mistake, or whether I misunderstood the directions given me, but the eight persons who ought to have gone to No. 52 boulevard La Tour-Maubourg, were taken to 72 boulevard Voltaire, while those who ought to have slept in this last house were stranded at La Tour-Maubourg.

They only found out the next morning that there had been a mistake.

At the end of May, M. de Maupassant took me one

day to Triel, in order to choose a villa for the summer. My master wished to leave Paris, without going too far away, in case he might wish to see the Exhibition.

My master found what he wanted at the farther end of Triel, near Vaux. The villa, buried among trees, faces the Seine; one of the sides of the house skirts the towing path.

On our way back we followed the river up to the bridge joining Triel to Vernouillet, where the station is. My master did not want to return immediately to Paris, he was fascinated by the view of the river-side, already clothed with flowers. He chose one of those arbours of the restaurant whence you can see the perspective of the river, and they brought us our lunch there. . . .

M. de Maupassant was seated, looking towards the bridge; he could follow with his eye the course of the Seine, as far as the Isles of Meulan. On the opposite side, fine trees were grouped, casting their high reflections over the running water, on which they threw large dark shadows.

My master looked at all these details with the deepest attention; he seemed to scent them from afar, for I could see his nostrils quivering, and his frown showed how deeply he concentrated his powers of observation. He was entirely absorbed by his contemplation of the landscape. There was a slight smile on his lips. . . . He thought of nothing but the beautiful scenery; he was evidently trying to stamp on his brain the unalterable impression of the delightful sensations he now felt. His face, so placid, so serene, gave me the idea of absolute contentment. . . .

Yet, in the full light of day, that face showed traces of fatigue ; but its intelligent expression made one forget everything else. . . .

M. de Maupassant, when ordering lunch, told the servant she must give him good fare.

" I shall drink St Galmier mineral water ; and you, François, must choose what you prefer."

The girl departed.

" I have always," said he, " a better trust in these popular restaurants, when women see to the service."

Then he told me a few anecdotes about the period when he took to boating as a regular pastime.

" One day," said he, " I had started from Croissy to Paris, with the intention of rowing part of the night. But when I reached a place called La Folie, beyond Carrières—St Denis, where the railway from Paris to Maison Lafitte crosses the Seine, I broke one of my oars. Then, I moored the yawl to the shore, and started to walk to Paris. I reached Bezons, always following the Seine, when suddenly an enormous dog, on guard before a warehouse, rushed out at me. I hadn't a single weapon about me, not even a cane. I was wearing ducks and a jersey ! I thought the fight would be quite unequal, and threw myself into the river, so as to swim across it. The dog followed me, but he did not catch me because I dodged him, as I am a good swimmer. I obliged him to go up stream, which was too much for him, and that saved me. Next morning, as I went to fetch my boat, I called on the dog's master to tell him that if the same thing occurred again, I should shoot the animal with my

revolver. He cut up rough, saying that I should then have to fight *him*; I left him, telling him that if obliged, I should certainly shoot the dog, and that if *he* appeared, I would stand up against him with the greatest satisfaction. I confess I should have been pleased if the worst had happened, I would have thrashed that brute in a way he would have recollected. I am afraid of no man. I can beat the strongest, nine times out of ten, by my great agility."

My master was brimful of recollections.

"I have never told you," added he, "what happened to me one evening at Étretat? I don't recollect the hour, but the sky was clouded, and you know that in the valley, between the two hills, night is always more opaque. I was coming to the garden hedge without perceiving anything unusual, when, close to the hazel trees, a powerful dog suddenly rushed at my throat. He attacked me so violently that I nearly fell backwards. I had hardly recovered my balance when he sprang on me a second time. Then, I seized his throat with my left hand and put my right arm round his neck, so as to hold him down, and strangle him if I were strong enough. He was in a bad plight and he knew it, for he made a tremendous effort to cast me off, and, locked together, we both rolled into the ditch which skirts the high road. I was uppermost, he was almost on his back and in a towering rage: his body quivered, and he snarled most frightfully. I was quite cool, and was about to put my knee on his throat, when, as chance would have it, I found, under my right hand, a large jagged stone. Without stopping

to think, I seized it and plunged it between his jaws, forcing it as far down his throat as I knew how. I understood in an instant I had overpowered the creature, his body hardly moved. I took my hand out of his mouth, leaving the stone, and got up, with a thousand precautions. I ran to fetch my stick I had let fall on the path so as to knock the animal on the head and finish him. But the struggle was over, I heard the dog flying away amid the corn in the next field, and there was no more growling. I was astounded.

“ My clothes were done for ; my hands bleeding. I bathed them well in coal-tar soap, wetted some linen with the composition, and kept them wrapped up all night. The next morning I saw the bites were not deep. But you may imagine my surprise, when, on opening my door, I beheld the dog lying on the mat ! He saw me, got up, and came crouching towards me as if asking my forgiveness. I showed him my wounded hands ; he licked them most tenderly ; then I gave him some milk to drink, so as to heal his wounded throat. He drank—I coaxed him, and then he ran away. And during two or three seasons, without excepting a single day, I found that dog at my door, no matter at what hour I came down.

“ One day, Cramoyson wanted to drive him away ; I begged him not to do so. The poor animal could not tell me the reason for which he had attacked me, but I was really touched by his daily visit, and since it pleased him to come to me, I would not allow him to be driven away. We had become the best friends in the

world, our first encounter had been stormy, indeed frightful, but it was forgotten. We were both of opinion it had been a mistake ; we were meant to be friends, not enemies. I learnt afterwards that the animal belonged to the manager of 'Old England,' who occupied a villa at Étretat."

Lunch was nearly over. The sweets were on the table, and a rice cake.

"Do you know, François," said my master, "water brings out the flavour of sweets?"

Then he made the servant bring me a clean glass, and poured me out some of his mineral water. I must say, it gave the cake a better taste.

While eating, my master let his smoked glasses fall, the better, no doubt, to see the Seine, which he was never tired of contemplating.

"Ah!" said he, "I know the river, as well beneath the water as above it. How often I have plunged into the Seine! A few years ago, I left Sartrouville to live at Croissy, so as I might no longer have to pass the Port-Marly lock, where, when I had to wait too long a time, I used to put my yawl on my shoulder and carry it to the other side. That is why my right shoulder is slightly hollow. I rented a little house at Croissy. There, I had a few neighbours, among them a very distinguished engineer, who, to please his wife, had come to spend some time in this suburb.

"One night, I heard someone calling me from outside. I opened my window, it was my friend coming to tell me he feared his wife had thrown herself into the

Seine. He asked me if I could help him to search for her. His agitated voice told me how heavy his heart was. I shall never forget the impression made on me by that man's voice asking me to accompany him. He was in despair. I did not hesitate, put my bathing kit on, and in five minutes, I was plunging into the river, where my friend thought his wife had disappeared. For a whole hour, I examined the bottom of the river round the spot he had shown me, but I discovered nothing. I then told him his wife was not in the Seine; he seemed to doubt me, he was so convinced she was there.

"Perhaps she had threatened to drown herself? I would not question him, but I tried to cheer him by saying the bird had simply flown away from the cage, and would soon return, regretting her flight. 'Near the river-side, during this lovely, most poetical night,' added I, 'her excited brain will have cooled down. While looking at this beautiful spot, she will remember the happy hours you have spent together, she cannot forget them. Don't fear, she will not remain long away; do not let us be alarmed, let us wait patiently.'

"A few days later, I heard someone opening the door of my little house, and my friend came in. He was beaming with happiness and stretched his two hands out to me.

" 'My wife has come back!' he cried, 'I love her even more than before, if it is possible. During her absence, she has given up all those exaggerated scents which I cannot stand. Now, my dear friend, her clothes have the sweet scent of the fresh summer air

which I breathed that evening, while you were so boldly plunging into the water.' I am told they now are quite happy ; I do not often see them ; I am so occupied . . . always and everywhere."

We left the restaurant. My master walks briskly on the bridge. After paying the toll, I joined him.

"That suspension bridge, always quivering," said he, "makes me think of an old man with St Vitus's dance. And how well I know the Seine! She has given me such good times, but she also has given me rheumatism which I cannot get rid of. I bear her malice, on that account, however, perhaps the more so, as hitherto she has given me no opportunity of getting the Humane Society's medal. And yet, I have rescued thirteen from the water, eleven dead people, two living. The dead don't count, and the two living people, belonging to Societies, are of no use either. There must be a new opportunity for me to earn my medal, that I do so wish for. For me, it would be worth more than any 'Legion of Honour.'"

We were alone in the railway carriage, and both took seats back to the engine. Passing by Médan, my master looked out of the window.

"Zola is perhaps at Médan," said he, "the windows of his study are open."

June the 18th.—We are settled at Triel. My master has been to fetch his yawl at Poissy, and sends me there to bring back the boat *Tonneau*. This little craft, thus named because the shipwright had made it perfectly round underneath, was intended to be the *Bel Ami's* small boat, but it never could go to sea. I

went to fetch it one afternoon ; my master was there. He came on board with me, and we went slowly down the river, under the big trees, Villennes on one side, the islands on the other.

My master kept silence, his dreamy eyes gazed through his glasses on all the greenery, and on the flowers blooming by the smiling river-side. After we had passed Villennes, he showed me a house.

" Do you recognise that place ? " asked he.

" Yes, sir, 'tis M. Zola's house."

" He gives himself the devil's own trouble ! " said my master. " He has taken into his head to write a novel about every sort of workman. He has given himself an awful task, and really a talented novelist ought not to attempt such things. I have often thought on the subject ; according to me, a writer must only describe what he has felt ; to express a thing well it must have been seen and understood. I think also, one must not only understand it, one must either love or hate it, in fact, be imbued with every detail of one's subject, see them distinctly, and have studied them thoroughly. I shan't follow Zola on that road. I shall only write what pleases me, on a subject that interests me. I intend to keep the style of composition I have adopted, and bear my individual stamp. Zola and Hector Pessard, who lives at Triel part of the year with his mother, will come to lunch here the day after to-morrow. . . ."

We reached Triel harbour, and my master took the oars out of my hands, as I did not pull hard enough to please him. We were passing before M. Pessard's

house, and I think he would have been ashamed his boat should have been seen going along so slowly, particularly as we were rowing with the current. It was a question of his pride. . . .

Two days later my master placed M. Zola opposite him at lunch ; his friend M. Pessard was on his right. The conversation was very ordinary, literature was hardly mentioned. The names of a few writers were alluded to, that was all. They talked in snatches by fits and starts ; notwithstanding M. Pessard's efforts to create some interest.

Just like two cats watching each other, the two great novelists would throw a glance at each other, then look into their plates, as if really the contents thereof were of immense importance. Generally, such was not the way with my master, who was usually so jolly and unaffected. The ice, in short, was never broken.

Immediately after lunch, M. Zola went for his usual walk to Cheverchemont, and my master accompanied his friend M. Pessard, who wished to visit the mushroom beds of Temple and Vaux. At four, I brought in my master's tea ; he was lying on his couch, but got up hastily, and began abruptly to tell me his impressions, without looking at me.

" I consider that Zola," said he, " is a great writer ; his literary value is very considerable ! "

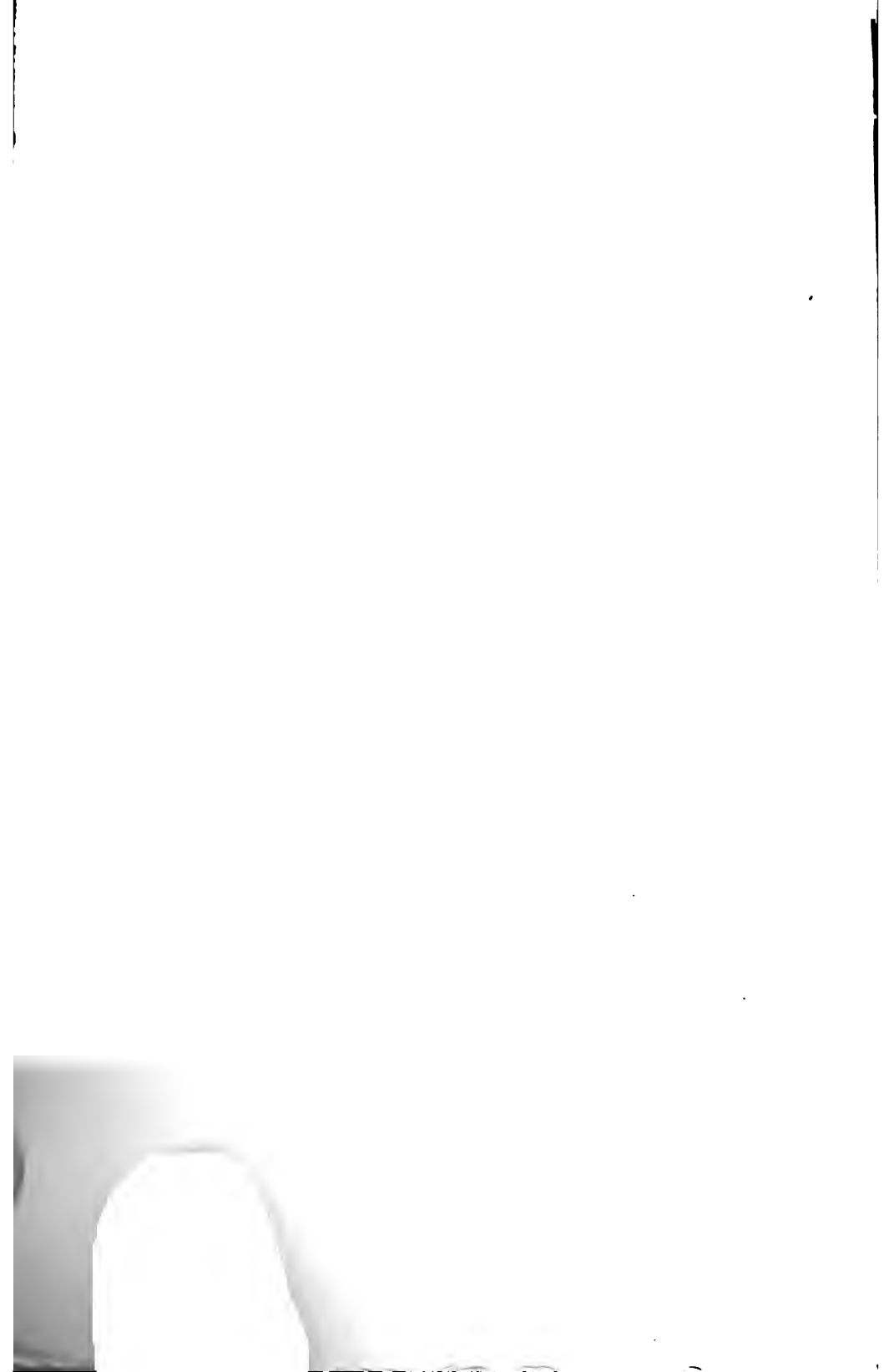
Then looking at me—

" As to himself, personally . . ." said he, with bitterness and repulsion, " I don't like him at all ! . . . "

A moment later he came to fetch me, to pick up



TİEMÇEN, 4 NOV., 1890. THE BOIS DE ROULOGNE



with him the small branches he had cut off the trees bordering a path leading on to the lawn.

"See, François," said he, "it looks much better so."

"Yes, sir," I answered, "but the narrow path leading to the well also requires the same operation."

He came, and cut off a good many shoots, even branches. He worked very hard, getting very hot, and how happy he looked! He was certainly much more pleased, notwithstanding the damp (for it had been raining quite recently), than he would have been at a party given by a Prince.

"Really," said he, when he had finished; "I should have made an excellent gardener; anyhow, the work is most delightful!"

July 13th.—M. de Maupassant tried taking baths in the Seine, instead of continuing his shower-bath, but with no good results.

To-day, a young couple, friends from Paris, came to surprise him. They stopped to dinner, which pleased him much. During the meal, he told them of his visit to Dr Grubby (of the rue St Lazare, in Paris), and mentioned the complicated diet he orders him: no bread; potatoes cooked English fashion three times a day; as many eggs as possible, prepared in different ways, fish from the sea at every meal, a great deal of poultry and butcher's meat, very few green vegetables no game; no wine, but at least two pints of milk a day

"I don't mention medicine," said he, "the list would be too long, but I don't know how my digestion can stand so much food."

On the 17th the oculist came to lunch with my

master, whose eyes are no better. On the 20th he went back to his Dr Grubby, and told me in the evening he had obliged him to speak out.

"When," added my master, "he had finished his litany, I stared at him most intently. Then he got angry, and exclaimed :—

"To you, M. de Maupassant, who are an intelligent man, I prefer telling the truth. I treat people entirely by persuasion ; still, allow me to say I obtain good results, you can see for yourself that in all the things I prescribe for you, some may be of use to you and do you a great deal of good.'

"Then," concluded my master, "I knew what to think."

I afterwards tried to make my master follow this system without any exaggeration ; for assuredly it was strengthening.

Doctor Grubby died about 1899, he was ninety-three years old, and by a curious chance, in the last months of his life, he took nothing but a rich sort of broth which he made his servant always fetch from the Café kept by François, the ex-valet of M. Guy de Maupassant !

Though not in very good health, my master gave a few dinner-parties and lunches at that time ; one remained celebrated on account of an eel-stew called *Matelote à la Mère Didier*, still remembered by some of the guests. And they cannot have forgotten setting off, in a frightful storm of rain, on board the yacht *St George*, moored opposite the house, for a sail that afternoon.

They were apparently all anxious to get on board ; they reached the beach, but the rain came down in torrents, which did not prevent their laughing heartily. Instead of protecting themselves with their parasols, the ladies threw them into the small boat that conveyed them to the yacht ; of course they were wet through. What did it signify ! They laughed all the same. When every one was aboard : *Poum ! poum !* went the *St George*, for she was a steam yacht. Our *Bel Ami* starts without any noise, she glides on the water, graceful as a swan ; no trepidation, no nasty smell of coal. However, here there is the steam, we shall see . . .

The rain has left off, it was only a sharp shower ; the sky is clear towards Mantes, there are only a few white heavy clouds flying along. The sun shines straight on to the deck where the ladies are now settled, hoping the bright rays will dry their clothes.

The *St George* turns round ; we pass under the bridge of Triel. I looked back and could no longer see our villa ; we passed Villennes, Médan ; no one even mentions M. Zola, before whose house we fly. We rush by Poissy. The yacht goes well, which pleases me, because it is on this boat we are to travel on the Meuse, from Namur to Rotterdam. We reach Herblay ; the country is ugly ; the owner of the yacht lands so as to buy some chickens and improve the dinner, which seems to him very inferior to the lunch offered by Maupassant. He is told that on board ship you can't get what you have at home. But he only listens to his vanity, and brings back two

consumptive chickens, bony and full of gristle, the dinner being already very good and very complete.

The weather is quite settled, the warm sun makes all forget the storm, every one is seated on deck. A few notes of some opera seem to follow in the wake of the *St George* and lose themselves among the bushes lining the riverside. They start games, but with no success, these amusements evidently not being open-air pastimes.

In reality, games are quite unnecessary, the owner of the yacht knows how to amuse his guests ; he is both gentlemanly and entertaining. He also knows how to please, being a very handsome fellow, with splendid black hair, a perfectly defined dark moustache, a mouth red as a girl's, a slightly pointed chin, well and freshly shaven. He has great success with the ladies.

One of them is constantly looking at him, her eyes never leave him. Sometimes she opens those large eyes wide, then the lids meet slowly with an endearing expression, for a long minute they keep the shape of a half-open almond. Ah ! what play these eyes have ! At the same time her nostrils palpitate, her pink lips turn mauve-coloured and almost white ; her bosom heaves a deep sigh. Ah ! fair lady, your love is calling, every trait in you is saying to him whom you gaze at : " Is it I whom you prefer ? " He understood, and was full of attention to her ; when he pronounced her name, all his being seemed to vibrate, He was completely fascinated by her, he spoke to her

with the greatest tenderness, his heart was beating delightfully. . . .

My master, of course, had some success with the ladies, but the handsome dark fellow put all the others into the shade. My master was not jealous ; on the contrary, he tried to facilitate his friend's success. On board there were also a painter (sometimes courteous, but often absorbed by the thought of his picture, a portrait still on the easel in his studio), the head-clerk of a State department, and two men of the best society, who most kindly helped me to lay the table.

Dinner was served early on account of the daylight and because the excursion had made every one very hungry. At table they were very merry ; all kinds of pranks were played, and the dishes were emptied as if by magic. Champagne is the wine they prefer, and the splendid *Aurora borealis* then lighting up the sky gives the wine in the crystal glasses a lovely coloured hue. And the guests' faces are flushed. I have nothing more to do, and go forward to dine with the engineers. Night falls, we are in the dark, the lights of the yacht throw their rays before us but leave the deck quite obscure, Venetian lanterns are lighted, and all are merry again. The stars seem quite small, one of them shoots down.

" 'Tis Heaven sending a kiss to earth ! " exclaims a young countess.

The painter, who now is contemplating a fairy-like picture with these ladies grouped astern on the yacht lighted up by variegated lanterns, is suddenly roused out of his semi-lethargic condition.

"Yes, madame," cries he, "'tis really a fiery **kiss**."

Then he explains the phenomenon in **scientific** terms, which do not in the least satisfy the **Countess**.

"M. de Maupassant," says she, "I am sure **you** know something about the embrace of these **powerful** elements. . . ."

"Very little, madame," answers the author of *Une Vie*, "and I deeply regret it since the **fact** interests you. But as to the art of kissing or the **art** of love, if you prefer it, read what Michelet tells **us** about the dwellers in the sea and also of certain vegetables, which know how to enjoy happiness **far** surpassing . . ."

The lady did not allow him to continue his speech, she suddenly took his arm and they went to the other extremity of the yacht to finish their conversation, to the great disappointment of the other guests who also wished to hear the end of the explanation.

There were reproaches ; they were obliged to come back, they were both laughing so heartily they almost had to be carried, but it was impossible to obtain any more particulars about Love and Kisses.

There was a pause, then another good-looking lady began to expatiate on the delight of this charming excursion, in exquisite weather, with such merry, such witty companions. . . .

"I should like to remain here all night," said she, "indeed I wish the trip could be prolonged for ever."

"It is a pleasure," said my master, "I have often enjoyed. Many a time have I seen daylight appear on this beautiful river, on the Chatou side."

"Not alone, I trust?" quickly said the lady.

As my master would not answer, a chorus of feminine voices ordered him to reply. But the author of that wonderfully powerful sketch *Sur l'Eau* got out of it without saying yes or no, which much provoked the lovely passengers, who all exclaimed: "Ah! that clever Norman!" . . .

The horizon widened, one could only perceive scattered lights.

"We have been steaming about for a long while," thought I, "no doubt we are going to Elbeuf or to Mantes. It is one of M. de Maupassant's practical jokes. . . . All will have to sleep at an hotel."

But I was wrong; we reached the bridge of St Germain at one in the morning. Landaus are waiting there to take the ladies and a few of the gentlemen back to Paris. My master, some of the most intrepid of his friends, and I, take the train at St Germain and reach the rue Montchanin at three in the morning.

On July 21st my master resolves to return to Paris. He is not satisfied with his doctors; last week Dr Grubby confessed persuasion was his only mode of treatment; to-day his oculist tells him the bad condition of his eyesight is only the sequence of his general health, which must be cared for to obtain any improvement. My master fancies the neighbourhood of the Seine may be bad for the nervous condition he now suffers from, so he gives order that the boats may be moored off Poissy, and on the 25th he starts for Paris, which I reach that evening with the furniture waggon.

On the 27th we took the train for Étretat, where my master was very pleased to find his powerful shower-bath and the very cold water of the well. A few days elapsed, he was much better and began to work again. *Notre Cœur* was on the stocks, but he abandoned the novel for a whole week so as to write an article for the *Gaulois*, and a tale he had suddenly thought of.

"I have it in my mind completely finished," says he to me.

And he wrote it in four days, filling up seventy-two pages of foolscap without a single erasure. When finished, my master, intending to keep this manuscript, caused it to be copied.

Little Pussy had settled down on my master's bureau while he was writing, and he drew a silhouette of her, with a few strokes of his pencil.

"I shall have great trouble," said he, "in getting Pussy to remain as quiet as her mother did on my writing-table. Her temperament is infinitely more sensitive; cat-like, she is agitated by the noise of my pen running over the paper, she keeps the attitude you see and is always ready with her paw to hit my pen which squeaks a little. If the shopkeeper has smoother paper you had better get some. . . ."

Many of my master's intimate friends are here. There are tennis-parties in the afternoon. From six to seven my master fences in the garden, he prefers the open air to his fencing-room.

There are dinner-parties almost every evening at La Guillette, followed by entertainments with a

magic lantern, or amateur theatricals. It is easy to organise these amusements in the new drawing-room which opens into the old dining-room.

One morning as I was returning from the garden, my apron full of French beans, I found my master in the kitchen contemplating his map of the Heavens ; and this time he seemed very cross.

"François," said he abruptly, "pray shut all the windows before nightfall. I hardly closed an eye during the night. I tried the beds in all the rooms, there were spiders in every one. These insects inspire me with the greatest repulsion, I do not know why, but they horrify me. The abominable creatures climb up the balconies and thus get to the windows. Mind you close them all before night, I do beg of you."

During the afternoon following this bad night, master told me to come up to the first floor with two lighted lamps. He had closed both windows and shutters ; all was dark. We hunted after the spiders ; first we examined three bedrooms, where we only found some small insects with long thin legs and a tiny body, absolutely harmless, but they were killed all the same. Then we reached the blue room reserved for friends. My master first placed a lamp in each corner near the window ; then he shook the curtains, two enormous spiders escaped, hiding behind the mirror on the mantelpiece.

I proposed removing this mirror which was not very large.

"No no," said my master, "I should fear an accident to the top of the frame which, my mother

tells me, is the work of a mystic, and represents the arms of the Le Poitevins, if they had assumed their title of nobility."

The carving was both delicate and fragile. Two lances supported several vases containing no flowers and looking rather unsteady. They were surmounted by two Cupids walking with difficulty on the edges of the weapons; they were apparently trying to reach the heads of two leopards; and their own doll-like faces seemed as if about to kiss each other. A coat of white paint covered the whole design without improving it.

Then M. de Maupassant dragged the bed into the middle of the room, and made me abandon my station near the lamps to help him hang a large band of black stuff in the recess. He made me put a lamp against the wall so as to light up the back of the mirror, and hiding behind the black cloth, he began to hum in imitation of soft music. We had not to wait long, the two creatures came out of their hiding-place, rushed to the edge of the cornice, and took refuge in the dark between the black cloth and the recess, where they were captured. Their dead bodies were put on a plate with those of the small spiders killed previously, and escorted by Pussy and Pel, we carried these disgusting remains to the fish-pond. The small bodies were immediately absorbed, there was some delay about the larger ones.

"Perhaps I was wrong," said my master, "to give those large spiders to the fish, for their suckers are very venomous. You see how the fish hesitate to

swallow them. Is it possible that they scent the venom? It may be so. These insects are as dangerous on account of their strong claws as for the poison they launch by their suckers."

Pussy watched all this with deep attention. As to Pel, he galloped about, jumping now and then up to his master. Poor Pel has neither the "dignity" nor the intelligence of his father, the solemn Paff.

CHAPTER XIII

AUGUST 18TH, 1889

The anniversary of St Helena—The large yacht *Bull-dog* brings the smart people—The Norman Nausicaas—The humane doctor—Sphinx Cottage—An old-fashioned country dance in the meadow—The Montmartre murder, and Marius Michel the painter—An inextinguishable fire and headlong flight—Escape of the supposed murderer—An amusing raffle—"It is the cock" . . .—A rabbit for Madame Arnould Plessy—A most lucid somnambulist—Fifteen hundred sightseers round the *Guillette*.

ETRETAT, August 17th 1889.—Painters working in the small path near the kitchen are finishing a picture representing the Montmartre murder. Master admires the masterpiece and laughs heartily.

"François, is everything ready for to-morrow?" he asks. "Have you all you require? Barrels, planks, smock-frocks, hats, hens, rabbits, a hut for the somnambulist, cans full of petroleum, and the prison, the water-pipes, nozzles, and both the pumps in good condition? To-morrow you will tell Eugenie to fetch some blood at Vimont's, it must be as hot as possible. The firemen's dresses are here, and I have seen the somnambulist; she is very well got up. And you have ordered the cakes at Madame Lecœur's?"

August 18th.—It is St Helena's day. The Étretat sailors and the visitors taking their daily walk on the beach stared when they beheld a splendid steam yacht, the *Bull-dog*, carrying the French flag on the main-mast and the colours of the Club de France at its stern.

Small boats brought to shore the fine ladies who were on board the yacht. The sea was like a mirror, the breeze soft ; it was pretty to see the white barks gliding slowly and gracefully, to the measured rhythm of the oars on the transparent green sea with an emerald bottom, which is only to be seen at Étretat. Laden with women in light dresses, wearing hats trimmed with flowers, and holding prettily hued parasols, these boats looked like so many floating gardens as they neared the shore.

The fishermen and professional bathers, all kindly people, went forward to help the ladies to land. Once on the pebbles, the new-comers shake their dresses into shape, and settle their hats. Suddenly they perceived, quite close to them, a row of white caps swaying continually to and fro. They went nearer, and saw with some surprise women occupied in washing linen in a spring flowing between large pebbles down to the sea. A small donkey harnessed to a cart stands surrounded by heaps of damp linen. One of the ladies rubs his head with her parasol, she would like to stroke the sturdy little beast, alone of his species in that country. But she cannot get near him on account of the heaps of linen which surround him, and she goes away with regret. That small donkey was given to the washer-

women by a kind doctor, who pitied the poor things obliged to carry on their backs their heavy loads of wet clothes all up the cliffs where they spread them out to dry.

"How I should like," said one lady, "to dabble about with those good women in that beautiful clean water!"

"Ah! I dare say," said her neighbour, "for five minutes! . . . Surely M. de Maupassant told me a river passed under his house. . . . No doubt it comes spouting out here."

Very true, the river, now a subterranean one, which passes under the Guillette, was formerly *la Rivière du Grand Val*.

All the Étretat hotels were full. Guests had not only come by sea, but also from Dieppe, Fécamp, and the surrounding country houses.

Towards two o'clock, groups of people took the *rue Alphonse Karr*, and reached the Pass, at the entrance of which many observed an inscription on the door of a chalet half hid in greenery and a profusion of flowers: *Sphinx Cottage*. This name must have recalled many recollections to those who belonged to Parisian society, for she who resided there for many years made such gaps in that society that she could never be forgotten.

The sheltered Pass is now left behind, the gay parasols are opened to protect the pretty faces against the burning sun; long trains sweep the dusty road; they stop opposite a chapel where the English who reside in Étretat can be heard singing like angels.

A few steps more and the first visitors reach the

open door of La Guillette. They see in the field on the right musicians with enormous hats, they are clad in blue smock frocks, so long that one cannot see their feet, so that they look as if they formed part of the barrels they are standing on. They welcome the guests by blowing as hard as they can in their instruments, performing a "Ça ira"¹ which my master had found among his grandfather's music.

"That piece," said he, "and the musicians' costumes, are quite accurate, according to the period."

The last notes had died away among the echoes of the cliffs, but still people were swarming on. The garden and the *carré normand* now formed a delightful picture, crowded with all these pretty ladies clad in fresh toilettes of different hues. Best of all was the light-hearted gaiety of the whole party.

When all had been introduced to each other, my master and some of his most intimate allies, organised a huge country-dance in the field. Every one joined in. I can still see my master—he had taken two ladies by the hand and danced with all his heart, dragging his partners on with him. They were laughing so much that if he had not held them up they certainly would have fallen. Occasionally some lady lost a shoe ; she screamed, and peals of laughter drowned the sound of the instruments.

There was a see-saw managed by amateur firemen on the pond, into which one of them fell and was thoroughly drenched.

Then came "the Montmartre murder," a startling

¹ A revolutionary song of 1793.—*Note of Tr.*

scene before which every one had to pass. The murder was represented at the back of a passage, in most suitable semi-darkness. The picture was painted with awful realism by Marius Michel.

A policeman has hung his wife up by the feet and, *wanting to see things he does not understand*, has cut an opening in her out of which real blood is flowing. My master's dagger does duty for the knife, and remains stuck in the wound. The effect of the whole is most striking, terribly realistic ; many of the ladies are frightened, and hide their eyes so as not to see.

Suddenly the murderer is detected in a group. All, aided by the firemen, rush after him. He is arrested and taken immediately to prison. In a few moments the cunning criminal sets fire to his prison, and taking advantage of the general surprise, disappears. The firemen do their duty, take up their hose and try to extinguish the fire. But the more they throw water on it the better it burns, because the prison is made of wood and straw, and has been soaked in petroleum. The guests, standing in the avenue round the prison, are much entertained by the sight of these brilliant flames. This is perceived by the firemen who suddenly direct their spray towards the groups of ladies, and leave the prison to burn as it pleases. There are screams in every direction, and all fly for their lives. My master is obliged to send us to stop the fun. A few napkins suffice to put an end to the whole affair. This was a first attempt at the style of play afterwards performed with such success at the Grand Guignol.

People went to be restored at the refreshment tables, of which Madame Leconte du Nouy did the honours with her usual grace. Her artistic head, as master said, looked beautiful, standing out from a background of flowers arranged with that intention.

After the drama there was a raffle ; a table covered with shelves had been placed at the bottom of the garden ; there were vases and pottery of all sorts ; I was much surprised to see two small China vases of old pink porcelain. All the numbers being distributed, they began to draw the lots ; each prize was immediately delivered to the winner and all were laughing heartily. The climax came when my master called out : " Number 16 ! "

" Here ! " answered a clear young voice.

" It is the cock ! " said my master.

And I put into the hands of a young lady a live cock, a very fine one, adding a hen, so as he should not be too much bored. The young lady, holding a fowl in each hand, was rather embarrassed, the more so as the birds struggled vehemently to get away. There were roars of laughter.

" Number 29 ! "

The celebrated actress, Madame Plessy Arnould, held up the ticket.

" That number," said my master most seriously, " wins a live rabbit with all his fur on ! "

I gave the lady her prize, advising her to hold the rabbit by his ears, which she did, saying almost with despair :

" I shall never be able to carry that animal ! "

"Yes you will, madame," said I, "you will find me in the boot of your carriage."

Then, walking sideways so as to hold the rabbit far from her as she could, the lady went toward the garden door. Many of the guests followed her, delighted to see her distress. The rabbit kicked continually, and at each kick the lady, giving a slight scream, took a step backwards. But she did not let me hold.

A fortune-teller's booth had been provided for Madame R—— who knew how to read the lines of the hand, distributed her predictions during the whole day to the ladies.

"My poor François," said she after the sitting, "it was time we finished, I was gradually growing rooted to my seat, I was so tired. However, one can get nothing without trouble, and I had a great deal of fun at the expense of those smart ladies. The best of it is, most of them believe what I said; 'tis extraordinary!"

It was dinner-time. My master's intimate friends were there, and also some amateurs who had most kindly contributed to the entertainment. All were in excellent spirits, and there was a coruscation of wit, sallies being launched and repartees following with the rapidity of balls at a game of tennis, skilfully played. Somehow, my master was not so gay as usual. Everything had gone off well, but it was easy to see he was not perfectly satisfied.

Next day he came into the kitchen and looked at his map of the Heavens, now somewhat forgotten by him.

said I, "you" "It was rather successful," said he, "but what a nuisance it is when there is an entertainment of this kind, that one can't have complete privacy! Did you see all those people close to the hedges and seated on the hill? I am sure there were fifteen hundred prying lookers-on. . . . If I possessed a very large house and grounds well shut in, I could manage something much more amusing. . . ."

And he described his plan, which I thought could very well be realised.

"In that case," said he in conclusion, "one would have to harbour, not only twelve or fifteen people under the same roof, but at least eighty or a hundred."

There was a laugh under his moustache, and he went off to take a walk round the pond and the *carré normand*.

That same day I met, on the road of the Great Valley, pretty Helène of the rue St Lazare. She was leading by the hand two lovely boys of five or six years of age, one dark, the other fair. She asked me to request my master to receive her; he had seen her and came forward to shake hands with her; but that was all . . . for he no longer cared to receive the visits of these seductive ladies. . . .

CHAPTER XIV

END OF AUGUST, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 1889

An excursion by sea to Italy—Paradise on the blue sea—Tales on deck—An allusion to the beautiful Allouma, heroine of *La Main Gauche*—Raymond's travels across the high seas—Off the Japanese coast—A flower boat—Distant music in the evening—The Genoese smells—In the fog—We put in at Porto-Fino and Santa Margherita—Music at break of day for the *Bel Ami*—Florence—In the museums—Hunting for curiosities—The church of San Paolo—Thoughts about war after the manner of Tolstoi—Pisa—Madame de Maupassant awaits at Cannes her son who is recovering from a short illness.

AT the end of August, we started for Italy on the yacht.

We left Cannes harbour at break of day, so as to take advantage of the breeze ; we passed the bar between the point of the Croisette and the island of Sainte Marguerite, leaving the Golfe Juan on the left.

Shortly after, the sun appeared like a ball of fire ascending in the sky above the Cap d'Antibes, which promised us a hot day.

Soon we were on the open sea, having nearly doubled the cape. But that was all. The wind had given us what it generally gives during the very hot season. However, in the afternoon, a breeze came from the east and carried us beyond Villefranche. There, master made us observe the beauty of the coast.

"Below," said he, "there is Beaulieu, a nest of green. Above is the Corniche road, a most exquisite drive."

Some time afterwards we passed before Capo della Mortola, and Bernard told us we were leaving French waters. In the evening he put the lights up and settled everything for the night.

It was decided that I and Raymond should take the watch till two in the morning, and that we should then be succeeded by Bernard and the pilot.

The heat was not so great on the second day of navigation, the breeze still keeping up. After lunch my master took the tiller, and we thus were able to have our meal forward, in the shadow of the sail.

Lunch over, the sails being sufficiently inflated by the wind, our taut little yacht glided along prettily on the blue sea. We felt well, my chest was dilated, and my lungs sucked in with delight the pure air. It was truly Paradise on the water.

We all wanted to talk, and praise this charming life on board ship, which had already turned us into members of one family. Assuredly, friendship, good-fellowship, family life as one leads it on board a boat, link people together. It is as if man, knowing himself to be isolated in the midst of the waters, felt the want of friendship and did, by instinct, all in his power to retain it.

We were together on deck ; and we began to tell yarns, so as to pass the time. The pilot, who was the oldest of us, spoke first ; he related in his picturesque language, half Italian, half French, the curious tale

of a shipwreck on the coast of Sicily. Then it came to the turn of Bernard. He detailed some amusing passages of his youth.

He said to my master when he had concluded :

" At that time, sir, I was not married."

" Pray understand, my good Bernard," replied M. de Maupassant, " that this circumstance leaves me perfectly indifferent."

Then I recounted an adventure which befel me at Algiers two years before, as I was seeking an apartment. I had reached the end of my story, and the others were still laughing ; I asked myself if I had not been rather too far.

" Very good, François," said my master, " that is quite Arabian."

Then he described to us the life of the Kabylia women. Though very complicated, and extraordinarily wild, it certainly bore a great analogy to the tale of *Allouma*, published in the volume *La Main Gauche*.

Allouma, an Arabian woman who has become the mistress of a wealthy Frenchman settled near Théniet-el-Haad, was occasionally struck by a sudden desire to recross the desert and return to the tents. And when she had satisfied her wishes, she would take again the long and fatiguing track over the sandy plains, return dead-tired, and crouch at the feet of the Roumi, her master.

It then was Raymond's turn to tell his story. He asked my master's leave, which, of course, was granted.

" At that time," said Raymond, " I took long

journeys to China ; I was young, hardy, and plucky. We left Marseilles on the *Agrippa*, a first-class sailing-ship, considering its type ; we were a crew of thirty-six men, all fine fellows. As in our preceding trips we passed by many seas and oceans. Now and then there was a gale, and some damage done to the ship, but that did not signify. What really matters with a sailing vessel is being becalmed, on a long journey ; it is enough to make sailors go mad ! One day, after seven months at sea, the captain told us we had reached our port. We stared, for none of us could see land. We went on for a mile or two, and received orders to anchor. At some distance we could see a low coast forming a sort of point that lost itself in the sea.

“Immediately communication with land was established, and two days later some barges came along to fetch our goods. We were off the Japanese coast, and the harbour did not allow of the entry of our ship. We were stationed there for seven weeks, the period necessary for unloading our goods, and taking in those we were to carry back to France. The crew was not at all pleased at having to remain thus out at sea. At least, we all said, when we were in China, we got into harbour and landed. This time, we were to stand seventeen or eighteen months’ tossing, without an interruption of even a quarter of an hour !

“These were the thoughts we communicated to each other, but we did not complain, for our captain, who was extremely energetic, was also a very kind man, and he was quite beloved on board. Some days

after, a large whaler's boat, filled with people, came alongside. You may imagine our curiosity, everyone was wondering what this could mean. The strangest part of it was, that we could not guess the sex of all these new-comers, for in that country male and female costumes are almost alike. As soon as they were all on board, the boatswain told us with a smile, thirty-six Japanese women had come to entertain us during our stay near that coast. You may imagine our delight.

"I don't intend to describe to you what went on. I will only tell you the Japanese were most amiable, and taught us the dances of their country. I never knew one from the other, all those lemon-coloured faces seeming to me exactly alike !

"You may fancy how short the six weeks seemed in such pleasant society, and the leaving-taking was quite pathetic——"

Here Bernard interrupted the yarn.

"Ah ! you may talk !" said he, with a roguish smile.

"My boy, you are jealous," replied Raymond, "you would much have liked to have been there."

M. de Maupassant asked for his tea, and ordered cooling drinks for the crew. Then he asked the sailors to tell him about the Far East.

We were all on deck in the evening, our boat was going slowly, Bernard at the helm, my master sitting beside him :—

"Why, one can hear music !" exclaimed he, suddenly, with some surprise.

True enough, harmonious sounds came from the Italian coast. Their sweetness was indescribable. It seemed as if, in a dream, we were thus gliding between the sea and the sky, such was the charm of this quiet night ; the sea was smooth as a sheet of oil, of a dark blue colour.

"It would not surprise me," said my master, delighted with this distant music, "if a whale came this way, music attracts them, 'tis strange that such an enormous animal should be so much influenced by harmony."

And some blowing cachalots passed close to our boat some hours later, making a noise like a tempest on the surface of the water.

Next day we anchored at Port Maurice. My master landed for a stroll.

"François," said he on his return, "this little town is neither interesting nor wealthy. I tried to change a hundred-franc note, and I could find nothing but silver. There is no gold, and as we shall pass the day here to-morrow, I will ask you to go to Monte Carlo for some gold, it will be handier for our journey."

September 12th.—We are now in sight of Genoa. We passed the outer port, and had to show our bill of health before we were allowed to pass into the commercial harbour.

"See, François," said my master, "what a splendid harbour !"

"Well, I prefer that of Marseilles, sir !"

"Ah ! but this one is wonderful !"

To avoid the contact of the trading-vessels, we

moored the *Bel-Ami* in the Dock called *La Vieille Darse*, but I do not think we were so well off as we should have been in the larger harbour. All around us were ships unloading their cargoes of oil, soap, and sardines, more or less fresh. The smell was abominable. Accordingly, next morning my master decided on leaving Genoa.

"Really," he grumbled, "one does not know where to go; there are nasty smells everywhere, and one walks about in filth. Genoa recalls to me that smart Tunisian lady who, when she went out, wore a long black veil down to her knees. That ugly piece of cloth generally hides a charming face, beautiful eyes, and a rosy-lipped mouth. Genoa, likewise, only shows her ugly, dirty, black façades. Still, she possesses splendid palaces, museums, great riches and pretty women, such as there are in Tunis."

After leaving Genoa, we sailed along slowly, following at a certain distance the coast leading to Porto-Fino. My master seemed to enjoy being in the open air, and being rid of the sickening smells of commercial Italy.

One night I had taken the watch at two with Bernard, and we found ourselves in a thick fog. I told Bernard I could not see twelve yards before me.

"François," said he, "a seaman *must* see through the thickest fog, and also during a storm, which is always accompanied by thunder and blinding lightning. So, look stedfastly, you *must* see."

Standing at the bow, my hand on the ropes of the sail, I looked my hardest, but could only see a sort



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of grey, compact foam, and nothing else. An hour, perhaps, passed away thus. Then there were successive changes, the foam whitened, forming a kind of curtain, limiting somewhat one's vision. Then spray, revolving and disappearing in the light mass, produced wonderfully varied hues, violet mingling with light yellow, blue turning into pale rose-colour. I was much puzzled by the play of all these exquisite tints. Now, I was beginning to see. The large white bank, where all the colours of the rainbow mingled together, disappeared in the waters under the powerful influence of the sun, shining red in the distance; the rays dispersed the fog, and the sun rose majestically and warmed us thoroughly the whole day.

"Now," said Bernard, "you can see."

"Oh, yes, and I should wish that extraordinary phenomenon could be reproduced some other morning!"

We had been sailing slowly on a smooth sea for several days, when towards two in the afternoon the pilot told me he saw Porto-Fino.

"Yes," said he, "I know it by the clock tower."

We all looked in the direction he indicated. Not distinguishing any interruption in the line of the coast, I confessed my doubts to my master. He then consulted his maps and the compass.

The map placed Porto-Fino behind a small cape.

"François," said my master, "you are near-sighted in the same style as my mother, who was always the first to recognise the coasts when I sailed with her."

By five o'clock we were anchored in the little

harbour of Porto-Fino, but we had weathered some gusts of wind coming from the hills on each side of the channel.

"I am going to land," said M. de Maupassant, "and take a bedroom for the night."

What a strange notion! Why spend money in a town, when one is so comfortable on board! Sleep is so sweet in the cabin-berth, rocked by the waves!

Porto-Fino looks charming on the edge of its small natural harbour, backed by hills covered with dark, green firs. Their rounded forms make you think of what the sculptor Falguière has intentionally omitted in the figure of his Diana, otherwise so perfect.

My master now goes every day to explore the coast in his small boat, and always returns full of wonder at the unknown things he has discovered. The *Bel-Ami*, if I may say so, was as if in an aquarium, for I never saw so many little fishes of variegated hues, as were constantly swimming around us. My master used to feed them, no doubt in remembrance of his Étretat goldfish which he was always regretting.

On the fifth day Bernard was ordered to prepare for a sail out to sea, after which we were to anchor at Santa Margherita.

On the first day my master found an apartment two hundred yards from the harbour, and on the southern side. He hired it for a month.

"Shan't I be able to work, François?" said he, "with that beautiful view of the sea!"

Two days later he told Bernard that as soon as a favourable breeze sprang up, he would take advantage

of it to sail on the *Bel-Ami* to Sistri-Lavente, and would then spend two or three days in the mountains.

So, one morning, after crossing that pretty bay, we reached Sistri-Lavente, in very fine weather. My master took a carriage, and started, with his dressing-bag. We took advantage of his absence and of our stay in this place to buy some provisions. The weather was so splendid that we spent the night in the harbour of Sistri and only returned the next morning to Santa Margherita.

M. de Maupassant came back on the morning of the third day. The little town was full of animation, people came and went, flags were flying on all the houses. We were asking ourselves what this could mean, when a citizen of the place begged the captain of the *Bel-Ami* to land. Then he solicited the favour of being allowed to play the *Marseillaise* before this yacht carrying the French flag, because it was the anniversary of the Unity of Italy.

My master gave the permission, but recommended Bernard to allow no one to come on board.

Towards three the concert began by the *Marseillaise* and finished with the same hymn, welcomed all the more by the inhabitants on account of the fact that they were thorough Republicans.

In the evening M. de Maupassant gave Bernard some napoleons, ordering him to offer the musicians a glass of punch. I was of the party, and there was a most charming entertainment. The generosity of my master thus brought us into contact with nice people of very good position.

I am sorry my master did not see more of the inhabitants of Santa Margherita, he could have obtained from them more inspiration than was given him by the sight of a countrywoman's profile when coming up a path.¹

Our stay came to an end, the *Bel-Ami* was sent on to await us at Genoa. M. de Maupassant visited some of the towns further inland, among them Florence.

We went by rail. But we had hardly been in this last-mentioned town three days, when my master felt tired and therefore did not go out. He asked me if I had been to see the galleries.

"No, sir——"

"You can easily visit them this morning, when going to the post to fetch my letters, as I shall not go out before lunch."

On my return I could not help expressing to M. de Maupassant my astonishment at seeing in these galleries so many works belonging to the French and Flemish schools, among others the *Virgin with the goldfinch*, by Raphael,² and various pictures I had read the names of in the Paris Louvre, as well as at Bruges, when I was younger. In the Chapel of the Bruges hospital you find many works by the most celebrated painters of the Flemish school. When once you have seen those masterpieces, you never can forget them; they produce such a wonderful impression.

My master then asked me if I had seen Titian's *Lady*.

¹ See the volume *La Vie Errante*.

² Does François take Raphael for a French painter?—*Note of Tr.*

"No, sir."

"Well, I will show her to you"; adding, "I have long promised myself the pleasure of visiting all those Dutch and Belgian galleries; when I go there, I promise to take you with me."

Next day we went to the Gallery at ten and admired the Titian he had mentioned; then we went to some curiosity shops, hunting for pretty things. My master bought a few. There were some beautiful articles, but to his mind they were not so artistically finished as he could have wished. They were not equal to any of the admirable pictures in those celebrated galleries; but he could not buy those, notwithstanding his ardent desire of possessing them.

In the course of our walk we reached the Piazza della Signoria; opposite us was the Loggia dei Lanzi. My master made me see and admire *The Rape of the Sabines*, then *Hercules vanquishing Nessus the Centaur*, by John of Bologna.

We came back to lunch, laden with our curiosities; my master seemed satisfied with the morning's work.

"One's head is turned by the sight of the masterpieces in this town!" cried he. "This wilderness of artistic things runs away with all my thoughts. My delight makes me think I can penetrate the souls of those great men, who have put all their inspiration into their perfect works."

To-day, October 22nd, my master is much better. He was ailing, and had to remain at home; it is over. His drawing-room window is open, and he watches a regiment of cavalry passing on the opposite quay of

the Arno. These horsemen, clad in embroidered uniforms, are playing very sweet, soft music.

"The instruments of that regiment," says my master, "make me think of one that used to be played at my grandfather's, to set the birds singing."

Then he read me a passage of one of his mother's letters, telling him to go and see the old church of San Paolo, which was so interesting.

Immediately after lunch we went to find this church. We soon discovered it. It is there they keep the flags and trophies taken from the enemy on the field of battle. Those glorious relics, hanging there in tatters, and quite faded, are very numerous.

A sexton accompanied us, explaining whence came all the flags.

"That is all very fine," said my master, "but what is less pretty is the number of lives all those rags have cost, lives of men who might have been more useful to their country than by sacrificing themselves in those wars which only do harm—I," said he, in a very loud tone, "am the enemy of war!"

And I thought my master was quite right.

When we came out of this Pantheon, my master spoke at great length about the valour of the nations which existed formerly in this fertile and pleasant land.

On our return from Florence we spent a few days at Pisa, a pretty and clean little town, celebrated for its leaning tower, and its exquisite cathedral. We admired the Baptistery doors with their bronze Cupids of the size of two year-old boys, which do duty

as handles. Near it is the Campo Santo, in a very bad state, the beautiful frescoes which adorn the walls not being protected in the slightest degree against the inclemency of the elements.

We were back at Cannes on the 31st of October at six in the evening.

Madame de Maupassant was at the door of the apartment, awaiting her son. She was extremely moved when she saw him, her voice was trembling, she could scarcely speak.

"My dear child!" said she.

As soon as he came in, my master informed her he had suffered at Florence from an attack of enteric, which had obliged him to keep his room, but that he felt much better and hoped it was over.

In the evening he continued giving his mother details about his health and his cruise. Before leaving the house to go home, Madame came into the kitchen, took my two hands in hers and thanked me for the care I had taken of her son since our departure from Cannes. Large tears fell from her poor sore eyes, and her maid, crying still more than she did, led her away. After resting for ten days, M. de Maupassant got much better, his ruddy complexion had returned.

CHAPTER XV

NOVEMBER 1889—JULY 1890

We return to Paris—We settle in the Avenue Victor-Hugo—Disagreeable vicinity of a baker—A lawsuit—The expert's dinner—The atmosphere of Influenza—Conversation about death—M. de Maupassant wishes his end to be in accordance with the religious notions of his family—Mr Taine and *Le Champ d'Oliviers*—Hating Crispi, M. de Maupassant destroys his manuscript about Italy—The mysterious visits of the Russian lady—A letter from Cannes—The tragic end of Pussy remains unknown to her master—Persecuted by the baker, Maupassant moves to the rue Boccador, and goes to stay with Lord R—in England—A Flemish profile—*Notre Cœur* is finished—Victor Koning and my master—Super-nourishment—Return of Maupassant's illness—At Aix-les-Bains—The Russian Princess and her bodyguard—The *dramatis personæ* and *scenario* of *L'Âme Étrangère*—The rope.

PARIS, November.—We are moving again. We leave the rue Montchanin for the Avenue Victor-Hugo, though I have tried all I can to prevent my master from taking this uncomfortable flat, an entresol just above a baker's oven.

November 25.—We have been five days in the new flat.

"François," says my master this morning, "if I had listened to you, I should not have taken this apartment, which pleases me, and I don't in the least hear the noise of the kneading trough at night. . . ."

Unluckily, as often happens in this life, what is

agreeable soon comes to an end, and this restful quiet did not last long. A frightful noise, sufficient to wake a deaf man, ascended every night from the subterranean regions. Then, all sorts of arguments were tried with the architect who had let this apartment to my master, but he could obtain no redress. He was obliged to go to law. On December 18th, the Court named an expert who was to spend part of the night in the flat so as to make an official report.

So that the expert might enter the apartment without raising the suspicions of the porter and the baker, my master gave a dinner party to which he was invited. Thus he only had to remain somewhat later than the other guests, in order to hear the noise that shook the house up to the sixth story every night.

He was an architect of the town of Paris, and I thought him most gentlemanlike and a man of great tact. During dinner, conversation was agitating and even disturbing, especially for such as I, who was present, but of course took no part in what went on. Many causes contributed to this excitement. First, the speakers all belonged to different classes ; next, there was a strange atmosphere arising from the dangerous epidemic of influenza which killed so many invalids at that time—one's nervous system was unbalanced.

Several medical men were present, their knowledge about this epidemic was discussed, and even disputed. The doctors argued with great persistence, but they did not have the last word. One of the ladies, whose mind was full of logic and undeniable facts, clinched the matter. Silence reigned in the dining-room ;

the heat made the lights flicker, all seemed ill at ease.

However, conversation was soon resumed. This time death and the immortality of the soul were spoken of. One could see none of the guests cared much about this world; but they feared "the other side," and there was a long dissertation on the nature of the soul!

Many arguments were brought forward to prove its existence; but doubt seemed to predominate. One of the doctors took advantage of this opportunity and tried to make out with great eloquence that the soul was simply an invention, that it did not exist. . . .

This denial was followed by complete silence, my master had not spoken for some time. Then he began, with great firmness:—

"If I were dangerously ill," said he, "and the people about me brought a priest to me, I would receive him, so as to please them!"

These words created so much surprise that the guests seemed astounded; I might say, they looked as if asking themselves if they had quite understood. Some of the ladies tried to oppose my master. Exclamations were bandied about, those who protested could hardly be heard through the tumult. Some wanted my master to take back what he had said.

"I am sure," exclaimed one person, "you would only receive the priest so as to console and comfort those around you, who are always to be considered under such circumstances."

This obstinate persistence annoyed my master, he did

not answer in words. He took a rose from the middle of the table, and slowly pulled the petals out, letting them fall on his plate, as if he did not wish to pluck the last petal. His uneasy smile made me understand he wished his guests had shown more self-restraint, and had not tried to inquire into his opinions. At some other moment those pretty perfumed rose-leaves he touched so delicately would have given him poetic inspiration. . . . His thoughts were far away. . . .

The next morning my master found on his drawing-room table these words signed by the expert :—

"The evidence of noise is more than sufficient"; and the lease was cancelled. Notwithstanding this success, I saw he remained gloomy. I brought him his tea.

"How unmannerly," said he, "clever people can be in society! After all, if, when I am on my death-bed, I choose to see a priest, I suppose I am free to do so! And," added he, "on that subject my way of thinking will never alter, and I will not accept these arguments; tending to oblige me to think like others. . . ."

That evening he came in looking quite gay, his usual good humour had returned. I helped him to dress, and he told me he had been to see M. Taine.

"I went," said he, "to read him my tale *Le Champ d'Olivières*. He was delighted, and told me it resembled Eschylus."

He saw I did not understand, and then explained to me Eschylus was an admirable writer, a poetic genius, the real creator of Greek tragedy.

A pale-looking lady has already come to our door,

Avenue Victor-Hugo, at nine in the morning. She asks for M. de Maupassant. . . . I think I have already seen her. She is a Russian, somewhat occupied with literature ; but, above all, she goes in for politics.

After lunch my master went out. I entered the study to put it in order and make up the fire. I see that the little cupids surmounting the Henri II. andirons are covered with black things that even spot the carpet. It is burnt paper ; on the marble slabs are some fragments of a manuscript which have escaped from the flames. I recognised the remnants of the manuscript on Italy lying among the ashes !

I could hardly believe my eyes. I was going towards that corner of the study where the manuscript was yesterday, when I saw on my master's table a few leaves on which he had written with his blue pencil the words : " To revise. . . ." There was no longer any doubt, the manuscript two hundred and twenty pages long, and of inestimable value, now no longer existed ! . . . It contained the recollections of my master's travels in Italy.

He recounted therein, even in more expressive terms than in his article on *War*, his feelings so full of compassion on this grand subject. He mentioned the Vicenza ladies shut up in a cavern ; the struggle at Pisa, Florence, and Milan. It was all so beautifully told, the reader followed the events as if they happened in his presence. We were deeply moved by them, we scented from afar off the smell of the warm blood flowing on the fields of battle he described ; it was as impressive as the reality would have been.

Then my master told about art and the great men born in that country. At page 17 he began the biography of a tourist who fell ill on his travels and was taken care of by his servant in his room at an hotel. The author of *Notre Cœur* had surpassed himself when telling of this simple fact. The feelings of the sufferer spoke for themselves, that passage struck me as so intensely vivid, that to my mind, M. de Maupassant never wrote anything more beautiful.

Later on, a few pages escaped from the fire were published in *La Vie Errante*. I tried to learn the motive of the auto-da-fé. My master remained inscrutable on this point; only, when speaking of Crispi, he would often say :—

“ That base individual has done nothing but harm to his country ! And to such a pitch that I refuse to read even what that man makes his newspapers say about France and her people. But, if one day, I find myself in his presence, I don't think I shall be able to restrain myself ! I think I shall tell him things he will be pained to hear. . . . ”

After hearing my master speak several times so bitterly about Italy, I concluded he preferred sacrificing his work to eulogising a country the governing powers of which persecuted France with such treacherous animosity.

Still, why did he destroy that splendid Manuscript? Destroy ? Could that be of use to Russian designs, which that lady from Tourguenieff's country came and advocated by her early visits ?

In the first days of January, 1890, I fell a victim to

a strong attack of influenza. My master resolved he would no longer put up with the baker's noise, and decided on going to Cannes.

"The move," says he, "will only take place in April."

Strange to say, he seems to leave me behind with a certain satisfaction I don't understand.

"You are not well enough," says he, "to come with me. You will probably have some more attacks of that nasty malady. Have a good rest, take care of yourself, I will write and give you some news of Madame."

Between January 12th and March 15th, when my master returned to Paris, I received several letters couched nearly in the same terms.

"MY GOOD FRANÇOIS,—Thanks for having done all my errands, and succeeded with the publisher; I am glad you are feeling better. Look out for a flat for me for the month of April, see it is comfortable, with a bath-room. . . . I leave it all to you, all you do will be right.

"Madame, for the time being, is pretty well satisfied about her health. Besides, her eyes are always better in the winter.

"I remain, my good François, etc. . . ."

I noticed my master did not mention his own health.

When he returned to Paris, I thought him not so well as when we came back from Italy.

He no longer petted Pussy. True, the little creature seemed to get wilder and wilder, she rushed away from

everybody. My master said she required air and freedom. I put her under the care of a porter attached to a big house in our avenue, where there were stables and a garden.

I thought she would be better there ; ten days after, the good man came to tell me that the Veterinary had advised that poor little Pussy should be put to death. I was very sorry, and those who had known the little animal, so playful, so intelligent, could scarcely believe this. I did not mention it to my master, it was useless to sadden him by the news of the death of the favourite he used to love. . . .

We are at the end of March, my master has taken a flat in the rue Boccador, but the move will only be on the 30th of April. He is better, but says he is not well enough to work at the last chapters of *Notre Cœur*. The noise of the bakery still prevents his sleeping at night, which is very bad for him. As there still remain a few days he cannot make any use of in Paris, he decides on going to stay in England with his friend, Lord R——, who is constantly asking him to return the visit he paid him at Étretat.

When he came back from England, my master had hardly entered the flat when he asked if his bath was ready.

"I shall take it immediately," he said, "for you cannot think how knocked up I feel ; as if bruised all over from head to foot ! Those devils of Englishmen, and that so-called smart society have put me into this state ; they are so boring, so conceited, so nonsensical I can't stand them. That is why I shortened my stay.

I only remained there a week ! And if I had not met with a splendid Belgian beauty in that insipid country. . . . Such a profile ! . . . and I am certain their great painter, Van Dyck, never met with such a magnificent creature in his whole career ! Had it not been for her, I should have been back at the end of forty-eight hours ! . . . ”

In 1892, I met Lord R—— in the Champs Elysées. He deplored most sincerely his friend's fate, in the words of a man who feels he is himself very ill. I was extremely touched by his kind remembrance of my master.

“ Ah ! how unfortunate it is,” added he, as he was leaving me, “ such a clever fellow, a writer who was almost perfect ! And always so good-humoured ! ”

April 30th, Rue Boccador.—We came here two days ago, and my master orders Kakléter to put the great curtains up in his bedroom, which has been transformed.

“ That is the first thing that must be done,” says he. On the third day, his bed-chamber and the study are ready ; he has his two rooms to work in, and finishes *Notre Cœur* without any trouble, while directing his upholsterer, who is putting up olive green hangings in the drawing-room. The ceiling is covered in by a piece of tapestry with large figures, the panels are also hung with tapestry representing landscapes and trees. The carpet is salmon-colour, the arm-chairs, sofas and chairs are all of different periods, principally, however, of Louis the Sixteenth style, and covered with old-fashioned silks. On the mantel-piece is a splendid



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block of white marble, it is a clock of authentic Louis the Sixteenth time, with its two very low candlesticks. The curtains are in excellent taste ; the gilding of the doors and looking-glasses has disappeared underneath the silk. The whole has a most refined effect, and my master's drawing-room is perfect.

There is also antique furniture in the dining-room ; a few pictures and old Rouen dishes hang on the walls. This room is lit up by a large bow-window, looking on the avenue, from which you can see the pont de l'Alma and opposite the Eiffel Tower, pointing to the sky, and which my master does not much admire, excepting during a storm. He is interested by the sight of the serpentine flash of electricity rushing along the iron ladders. Sometimes he remains a long time at this large window, watching this phenomenon and all that passes in the enormous space stretching out before him. My master's apartment is perfect ; a bath-room with shower-bath, a fencing-room, and five other rooms to the South with sunlight, and independent of each other. Leaving open all the doors, which are opposite each other, he can take a walk of twenty-five yards in a straight line. It is a dream for him, as he is so fond of walking while he is at work.

May 18th.—A lady comes every day ! How odd, I hardly know her ; when she comes in, she just pronounces the name of M. de Maupassant, and, without looking at me, she walks like an automaton into the drawing-room. My master never speaks to me of the visits of this almost unknown lady.

One morning, as my master was walking the whole

length of the apartment, he came to speak to me in the dining-room.

"I have pains in all my joints," said he. "Tomorrow, I shall begin taking a series of vapour-baths. Pray have everything ready."

But after taking three or four vapour-baths, and though we shortened the operation so as each only lasted ten minutes, he had to give up taking them. Hardly had he been five minutes in his arm-chair, when in a second his blood flew to the head. He knew it, so, to avoid congestion, he returned to his simple shower-bath, always following it up with rubbing his whole body with a horsehair glove and eau-de-Cologne.

Notre Cœur is finished, my master has given it to the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which will first publish it as a serial. He tells me that M. Koning, the manager of the Gymnase theatre, will come to see him in a day or two. . . .

After this visit, during which I heard the loud and imperious voice of this gentleman, my master told me the reason of his coming to the house.

"He has asked me to recast entirely to my taste, and also a little according to his, the manuscript of a short play M. X—— has taken from one of my tales. It seems easy enough; he would allow me a month for this work, but I said to him: 'Come here in a fortnight and it will be ready.'"

On the day fixed, the manager came to fetch the Manuscript and read it aloud before he carried it away. What a voice! Never had I heard so strong a one! When he came to paragraphs which pleased

him, he literally shouted and showed the manager's, perhaps the artist's, delight. . . . But he saw my master had omitted several playwright's touches he had told him about, he mentioned the fact, without making any reproaches, and went off enchanted. I can still see him in the anteroom, a short, stout man, with a red face, and jet-black hair. His large, fat red hand thrust the Manuscript of my master deep into the inner pocket of his jacket ; then he shook hands warmly with M. de Maupassant.

" I hope," said he to my master, " that when I am Manager of that theatre "—I think it was the Vaudeville—" you will not refuse to give me some good play of yours, which will be an excellent thing for the theatre, and a triumph for you."

My master let him depart without replying, but he laughed under his moustache, which meant that he almost consented.

June.—The doctors my master has just now advocate abundant food, without taking into account the difficulties of his digestion. They want him to eat a great deal, at least four times a day. In the morning, an egg beaten up in milk ; at noon, under-done meat, mashed potatoes, cheese ; at four, custard ; in the evening, the usual dinner. He remains in the same condition, taking all this food which is easy to assimilate, but does not get better as I should wish. He gives several dinner-parties and receives many compliments about his pretty and very comfortable establishment. His magnificent old Rouen dishes are much admired, indeed they are coveted by one

of his guests, a great collector ; but he will not sell them at any price. They are beautiful, exquisitely painted, and with detached handles, which add a great deal to their value. . . . Next day, my master examined his dishes and saw to their fastenings—one cannot take too many precautions !

At two o'clock on June the 7th, my master went to see his publishers in order to settle about advertising his new book. *Notre Cœur* appears on the 20th and there is work enough to fill up several afternoons. But I cannot quite understand what is the matter with my master. He talks to me, but I see none of that enthusiasm which generally accompanies the publication of one of his works. At last :—

“ You can conceive,” says he, “ how unpleasant the commercial part is to me ! ”

End of June.—The papers are favourable to *Notre Cœur*, the editions are swallowed up. So far, M. de Maupassant certainly is satisfied. It is not the same with his health. Still, for the last month, he has not gone into society ; in the evening, he has no longer a little cat to fondle and to touch. Therefore he amuses himself by causing the electric sparks to fly out of his own hair in the dark, and they crackle loudly enough under the comb, particularly about his ears. He walks out after dinner, comes home, rests before he goes to bed ; notwithstanding all his care, he sleeps badly. Between eleven at night and two in the morning, he calls me up three or four times for a cup of camomile tea, or else he asks me to cup him. This seems efficacious, for almost every time

we succeed in getting rid of his pain, or at least in soothing it.

The unknown lady has returned several times. Her demeanour is always the same, she comes in and departs silently ; she is not of the *demi-monde*, though too much perfumed ; nor does she belong to that smart distinguished set, where they like to laugh and by which master is so much invited. She is a bourgeoisie of good taste and resembles the great ladies who have been well educated whether at the *Oiseaux*, or at the Convent of the *Sacré-Cœur*. She has preserved the well-bred or even severe manners of those places.

I cannot be mistaken, I know the stamp of those religious houses ; during many years I have been able to appreciate it by studying ladies of very high rank in houses where I served before coming to my master. I have hardly exchanged two words with this lady, but I know by whom that rare intelligence has been moulded.

She is remarkably beautiful and wears with supreme *chic* her tailor costumes, either pearl grey or dark grey, with a waistband of real gold tissue. Her hats are very simple, matching her dress, and if the weather is gloomy or rainy, she carries a small cape on her arm. . . .

We reach Aix-les-Bains on July 3rd. My master settles down in a pavilion belonging to the *Hôtel de l'Europe*. This pretty nest is on a narrow path near the hill on the side of the Revard. There is a fine view, one sees the Dent-du Chat, just opposite,

rising above the chain of mountains, surrounding the south-eastern side of the lac du Bourget. M. de Maupassant takes his meals at the hotel. Since he has not come here to write, but to take notes for his work *L'Ame Étrangère*, every day he goes several times to the *Villa des Fleurs*, observing as much as he can a Russian Princess who is staying at the pavilion the Empress Eugenie occupied in other times. . . .

One day he told me to meet him in the evening in this "nursery garden of human flowers" as he called it, and he showed me the Princess. . . . After losing fifty francs at the racing game, I left and went on the shore of the lake, where the water gave innumerable reflections of the image of the moon.

Long did I follow the serpentine border of the turf that runs along the irregular contour of the lake ; the night was so calm, I could hear the murmur of the streams which fed it. What a charming recollection that evening left me ! The beautiful light, the restful quiet, the rustle of the water, the mildness of the air, and the sweet scent of the grass heated all day by the sun ! How I should have liked to sleep in the open air, if only I had possessed a boat which would have rocked me on that clear running water ! But I could not go on dreaming ; my master no doubt had come home, and I hastened to return to our pavilion.

Next day, lunching with the couriers and knowing a little Russian, I managed to make the acquaintance of the Princess's man-servant. The day before, we had made the balls roll about the billiard table of the café, and next day at four in the afternoon, I was

drinking exquisite Russian tea with cream in it in the drawing-room belonging to Her Serene Highness's lady companion. Two days after that, we went together to the Club theatre.

From that moment I was able to give my master all the details he wished so ardently to learn about this eccentric lady ; and he knew well how to turn them to account.

Our Princess was a leading personality in *L'Ame Étrangère*.¹ I never quite understood how my master intended to present in his novel, the lady's position. What I can say is that besides a thousand small but interesting details of the life of this Princess, there was one fact that impressed me ; she had two admirers who never left her, and travelled everywhere with her. It appears the Prince, her husband, was a very great dignitary who rarely came to France, and that only when his duties obliged him to do so.

One afternoon, the heat was such that I gave up taking a walk, I returned to the chalet, carrying a boxful of grapes, for here, besides his series of shower-baths, M. de Maupassant took his cure of white grapes. He heard me come in and called me to him. I showed him the box of grapes, which pleased him, and which he put on a table near his bed.

"On account of this intolerable heat," said he, "I thought it would be imprudent to walk out. Therefore I lay down on my bed, and for once in your life that you have not too much to do, pray try and rest. Here, we have not enough air. . . ."

¹ See page 24 of *L'Ame Étrangère*.

While eating his grapes, he began to tell me about his *L'Ame Étrangère*, but in that room I was so overcome by the heat, that I could not recollect what he said. Seeing I was suffocated by the temperature, he told me to open the door of the drawing-room and also the window looking towards the North. I breathed a little. My master laughed while playing with his grapes.

"If this continues," said he, "I will send word to Bernard and Raymond, and we will go to sea as soon as possible. We shall be better off sailing about. I will let you know in time. But, if by chance, you see an accident, or a murder, anything where there is the death of a man, a violent death, mind you, come and tell me directly, because I should like to take some notes on that subject."

Two or three days after this conversation, I was returning from a walk on the Marlioz road, when I saw, behind a bank, the body of a man hanging to the branch of a tree.

"Why," said I, "that's just what my master wants!"

But two gendarmes arrived, immediately followed by a woman; they cut the rope, the body was still warm, but the man was dead . . .

All the same, I went post-haste to tell my master. But it was of no use, he told me it must be a violent death caused by a knife or a revolver, or else the crushing of a body, with bloodshed! . . .

We have been several times up the Revard. My master contemplates for a long time, and with great

attention, all those mountains, and the scenery around Aix-les-Bains. One day, we remained up there till night. My master wants to study all the hues that appear in the vast panorama before us, by a beautiful sunset. The picture is perfect; the sun has disappeared into a valley on the right, it still lights up the lake in its whole length, giving its waters the colour of a blazing fire; the high summits of the mountains are now in the shade. Night is falling.

"Did you see that?" asked my master, as we came down. "Well, you will find the description in my novel. Aix and its surroundings will give me a splendid frame for my people. I am satisfied. It was a beautiful sight and I feel it is all imprinted here."

And he touched his forehead.

July 22nd.—My master is quite merry to-day, and between two peals of laughter, he tells me we are starting for Cannes the day after to-morrow by the evening train, so as to avoid the heat of the day.

"We are going *via* Valence, I did think of the railway of the Alps by Grenoble, but we should be obliged to take slow trains all the time, which would be more tiring. I have now all my documents; my people are in their proper places; there is no more to do. I see everything quite clearly."

I informed my friend, the Princess's man-servant, that we should soon be off. He appeared quite put out; so as to cheer him up, I took him in the evening to the Villa des Fleurs, and showed him how to play the game of *petits chevaux*, to which I had returned with the firm intention of getting back the two napoleons

I had left there a few days before. When my friend understood the system, I began to play myself ; he followed my play. During an hour chance favoured us, after which she became capricious ; at eleven o'clock, I said I had had enough of it. But he insisted on continuing ; a strange pallor had replaced the ruddiness of his complexion, his eyes shone like lamplight. I saw he was caught, but I succeeded in getting him away, he wanted to pay for anything I chose, as long as it was extraordinary and of great price.

" My friend," I said to him, " chance is an inconstant jade. When you have spent a pleasant quarter of an hour, the best thing to do is to take a modest glass of beer and go and dream in bed, thinking you are still winning. . . ."

Next day, when I went in for lunch, I remarked that for the first time, there were champagne glasses on our table. My Russian friend told me it was he who was offering that good French wine to all on account of my departure, adding that he had never been able to reckon up the napoleons he had won last evening at the horse racing game.

All the servants belonging to the guests at the hotel partook joyfully of these extraordinary libations, and the end of the meal was marked by much mirth. But there was a secret no one knew ; the champagne was the result of the good luck brought by the rope which hung the man whose body I had discovered a week before on the Marlioz road.

CHAPTER XVI

END OF JULY—NOVEMBER 1890

At Cannes—We are delighted to get on board the *Bel Ami*—The Ironclads and the *Richelieu*—A favourable breeze—Master's niece—The two lovers in the book *Sur l'Eau*—To M. de Maupassant's great joy, good Bernard begins to tell yarns—Impressions of Brittany—François goes on a pilgrimage—Arthur's Grotto—M. de Maupassant tells about his school-days at the Yvetot college—Saint-Tropez—The strange meeting at sea of M. de Maupassant and his father—Bernard's presence of mind saves the *Bel Ami* from striking on the reefs—Departure of Mireille's compatriots—At St Raphael—Fréjus, the Crusaders ; Gounod ; Alphonse Karr, etc. . . .—At Nice—The lesson given by the ants—At Lyons—Anniversary of Hervé de Maupassant's death—Here lies . . .—Communications about his end—Who knows ?

ON July the 28th, the Cannes station-master was walking up and down the platform, awaiting the Marseilles Rapide. The presence of Bernard and Raymond had announced the arrival of M. de Maupassant, whom the station-master welcomed with a deep bow as he got out of the train ; my master was pleased and spoke most kindly to him.

Then came the two good sailors—Bernard, with his dry tones ; Raymond, with his sonorous voice—also welcomed my master. Their faces said more than their words ; it was easy to see these two men loved him, not because he was their captain, but because

he was so kind to them. Bernard would often say, "Master is not only our captain, but also a comrade."

The *Splendide Hotel* is open. My master prefers staying there a short time before settling on board the *Bel-Ami*.

Next morning, he was at his window by seven o'clock, watching the sky and sea.

"François," said he, "it is fine, I think the weather is settled, I am going to dress, take my shower-bath at the Baths, and I shall be on board by half-past nine. Buy provisions for the day. We shall lunch on the *Bel-Ami*, do what you can to reach the harbour by nine o'clock, as we may weigh anchor as soon as I get on board."

The breeze was favourable, and we got easily out of harbour. We sailed about the bays of Napoule and Théoule, we passed before Doctor Magitot's dwelling, half-concealed by a recess in the mountain; we could just perceive it behind a thick curtain of dark pine trees.

My master lunched; then came our turn. It blew hard from the east, we had reached the point of the Estérel, and bore towards the open sea. Raymond stood forward, close to the outrigger, in the shade of the standing-jib; Bernard was seated in the stern, against the mizzen-mast. I remained near him, so as to be out of the way.

My master is sheltered by his white parasol, which is fixed to the boat. His two hands are on the tiller, he steers; all goes well, the breeze is steady.

"I think," says he, "we are running eight or nine knots an hour."

" I think so too," answers Bernard.

My master was satisfied and happy ; in those moments of pleasurable emotion, his face showed firmness and strength of will. He moved about on his bench, and occasionally gave a slight impetus to the helm, so as to obtain all the speed he could get from his yacht, and thus increase the rapidity of his *great white bird*, as he sometimes liked to call it.

Bernard began to talk, and I was searching the horizon with the telescope. Suddenly I saw two large vessels which I took for coal barges. But my master and Bernard soon saw I was wrong, Bernard saying they were two cruisers of a new species, with a pointed and plunging prow. They all talked of these new vessels, of their great use, their speed, hitherto unknown, and what people could hope from them. My master approved of this new model, ascribing great strength to it, both for attack and defence. Then talking of the old ironclads, he called them obstructive monsters.

Bernard was somewhat provoked, he tried to defend the men-of-war of his time when he belonged to the fleet ; but he was obliged to allow for the march of progress. My master saw Bernard was put out, and drew me into the conversation.

" And you, François, you have seen the old iron-clads ? "

" Yes, sir, fifteen years ago. I went on board the *Richelieu* in Brest harbour."

And I repeated what I had heard during my visit on this vessel.

"Yes," said my master, "the cardinal whose name was given to your ironclad was a man of many tricks, he played some on the King, and also, by rebound, on us. . . ."

He paused, and suddenly changed the conversation.

"Why, Bernard, it seems to me the wind is dropping."

"Sir, on these hot days, it is quite unusual it should be so steady as it is now."

"In that case, we won't go to Agay, and when you think proper, we will sail towards the islands, so as to return to Cannes towards five, in order that I may take a walk and stretch my legs before dinner."

At three, I went down into the kitchen to make tea. When I got back on deck, I saw the yacht was going faster. Bernard had to take the helm while his master drank his tea.

"I could not drink and steer at the same time," said he, "it is such a handful. See how fast we are going! The breeze is as strong as it was a quarter of an hour ago, and all the same, our sails are spread. I do believe we are running more than ten knots an hour. It is splendid for a boat of this size. It is a fine boat! You see, going so fast, and with every sail spread, it scarcely leans at all. . . ."

My master steered towards the open sea. He was delighted with this good wind. Then Raymond took his turn at the helm, and my master began to walk up and down the deck.

"François," said he, "I have given up my walk till after dinner. Now we are too far, and really it is

worth our while to go on. See how fast she goes ! Splendid ! That's what I call navigation ! ”

And he walked up and down his yacht. He was clenching his fists, which meant with him either boredom or delight. . . . This time he was certainly pleased.

“ One would think we were crossing to Algiers ! ” said he, steering again.

This was all very well, but the yacht, really going like a bird, was leaning more and more to one side, and water already covered half the lower part of the deck. I felt no fear as yet ; but all the same, I looked towards land, where I could only distinguish a large circle of mountains, and the Pointe d'Estérel, till it lost itself in the sea. Nearer, I could descry the Lerins islands, now forming but a dark spot in the midst of the immense mirror, so brightened by the sun's rays that one was quite dazzled by it.

At eight in the evening we got into Cannes harbour with just enough breeze not to be obliged to row. Captain Pierruque was awaiting my master on the quay, to congratulate him on his cutter's excellent trim. He also had been in the direction of the island, and he had seen us. My master listened with a smile ; he was delighted with his excursion.

“ I did enjoy my day,” said he, coming into the drawing-room ; “ the yacht went so well.”

Next day, July 29th.—I accompanied my master to Nice, where he went to see his mother, Madame de Maupassant, who now lives at the Villa des Ravenelles, rue de France. The house has only one story, but it is

built on a height and towers above the open sea. It is a most peaceful spot, with a magnificent view. As we came in we saw in the garden a little girl of four years old, with curly fair hair, tied up by a riband ; her eyes are of a soft, bright blue, her pretty white complexion is slightly roseate ; she is lovely, and is the niece and god-daughter of my master. She is playing at pushing a small wooden cart before her. Her uncle calls her, she comes and says prettily " good-morning," then returns to her cart, puts herself between the two poles, and runs along a narrow path which borders part of the garden. Madame de Maupassant calls Simone to come to lunch, she answers, but she does not come. Her grandmother goes to fetch her, and the child is quite vexed at leaving her game.

At three we left the Villa des Ravenelles for the station. The heat is terrible ; my master confesses he feels it, but says he is satisfied his mother has chosen this dwelling, for the air, between land and sea, is excellent, and that he also will stay at Nice next autumn.

Next day we again set out on the *Bel-Ami*. We are at sea, the weather is delicious. My master regrets his mother's constant refusal, every time he invites her to come and take a short cruise on board his boat. He would be so happy to have her there. . . . We lunch at sea, and at six in the evening we anchor in the harbour of Agay.

After dinner my master takes his walk on land.

Next morning, very early, he goes off into the mountain to chat with the hermit he likes to visit in his

poetical solitude. But he is disappointed, the man has disappeared, and has not been seen for the last two months.

On August the 2nd my master goes in the morning to St Raphael. In the afternoon he starts in the small-boat to go up the little river that loses itself in the mountain.

"It is all very pretty," says he, when he returns, "and most poetical ; the sides of the river are shaded by trees ; and there are splendid meadows. It is charming, but I shall not go there again, the branches of the trees, spreading down to the water, make it awkward for boating."

It is a magnificent evening, stars are beginning to shine in the blue vault, which is misty towards the east. We are seated on the deck of the *Bel-Ami*, now moored exactly on the same spot where, three years ago, the little black *Bel-Ami* lay at anchor. My master is seated on a folding chair, in the stern, and, as he did three years ago, he looks at the mountain and the zig-zag path where he then saw a couple of lovers walking, to him they had seemed the very picture of happiness. He looks towards the bridge and the shore, where these two lovers walked after dinner ; then he contemplates the inn, the window of their room, where shone a light which soon was put out.

"Bernard," said he, coming out of his meditation, "did I describe faithfully in my book, *Sur l'Eau*, the lovers I saw here one evening ? I am sure they had no idea they were so closely watched——"

"Yes, yes!" answers Bernard with an approving gesture and great energy.

And he starts on his favourite hobby— Bernard cannot hear the words "love" or "lovers" without wanting immediately to tell some adventure of his youthful days.

M. de Maupassant is aware of this foible and amused by it. This time Bernard relates to us his flirtation with a Morlaix cook, explaining to us the signals they employed. There was a flower-pot that was either placed at the window, or taken away according to circumstances. My master laughed, but Bernard continued his story with the utmost gravity.

"Ah, sir," said he, "the Bretonnes are really wonderful women! And that river, where I remained for four months on a paid-off boat, really it is the most picturesque I have ever seen in all my journeys round the world, it flows between two high hills covered with trees many hundred years old; and this ribbon of salt water, which comes like an ordinary river to bury itself in the ground, would make you suppose yourself in a forest, if the quiver of your boat did not recall the fact that you are moving. There was also the large viaduct that spans the river, but I did not look at it often, as the window of my beloved cook was on the other side. . . ."

Here the story-teller stopped.

Raymond was stretched out forward. He sleeps and snores slightly, Bernard wants to wake him, my master will not allow it. To change the subject, he addresses me :—

"François, you who know Brittany so well, you ought to tell us something about that part of the country."

"I said I had stayed once at Huelgoat, a beautiful spot near the Arrée mountains. There I saw picturesque rocks, one group of which is called the *Virgin's house*. On a fête day, I was walking in a wood near Huelgoat, following a pretty spring that meanders through the underwood; the large roots of the trees entangled on its borders formed natural dams, multiplying myriads of little foaming cascades which fell into the valley. As if to make the aspect of the place still more romantic, numerous painters, hiding in the grass, stood motionless before their easels, as if they were playing a game of hide-and-seek. I came across them unexpectedly in corners along that pretty rivulet, which was shaded by branches of light foliage of the tenderest hues.

"I was still walking on, not knowing exactly where I was, when I beheld on a path at the right, white coifs all coming the same way. I immediately supposed there must be something attracting them in that direction. I followed the same path, without being observed, and walked behind a group of young women. After taking a broad zig-zag lane, I reached a splendid group of gigantic pine trees. Immediately on the left, after having climbed on a mound covered with moss, I reached the goal of the pilgrimage, for it was really a pilgrimage that attracted these young girls. There was neither chapel nor saint, but it was the *Grotto of Artus* (Arthur), a famous Breton chieftain who fought

in the sixth century against the Anglo-Saxons, defending his country's independence. Later on, he became the hero of the chivalric tales of the Round Table and the Holy Grail.

"I hid behind a bush, to see what these young girls would do in the grotto. They went in, or rather slipped in, bending their heads very low under huge stones; then they passed through a species of high chimney, coming out on the roof of the grotto, a platform made apparently of large flag-stones. When they were up there, they began to dance, to laugh, to sing as loud as they could. They vied with each other as to which should sing the loudest.

"It was now time to come down; I suppose they did not care to come out by the same opening they had taken to reach the roof of Great Arthur's grotto, for each of them slid down backwards between two stones that formed a sort of funnel. Then they screamed, and they laughed, till the birds themselves ceased singing. . . . When this extraordinary descent was over, the birds began to chirp again, probably telling each other all they had seen."

"You always manage to be on the spot at the right moment," said my master, laughing.

We roared and woke Raymond; and my master began also to tell his yarn.

"I was only fourteen, and studied at the Yvetot college. They gave us that abominable beverage they call 'abondance.'¹ So as to be revenged for this treatment, one of us got hold of the storekeeper's

¹ Wine "abundantly" watered.—*Note of Tr.*

keys. When the headmaster and the others were asleep, we boys took from the larder and the cellar the best wines and liqueurs we could find, then we hoisted the whole, with infinite care, on to the roof, where we made a tremendous feast. . . . The alarm was given at four in the morning. As I was one of the leaders, and always took all responsibility on my shoulders, I was sent away. I was not sorry, because I was better off at the Rouen college, where I was sent afterwards. . . ."

My master then passed to another subject.

"How beautiful is the blue sea, to-night! And how strangely the crescent moon illuminates that point of land which almost separates us from the sea! And those thinly planted pines, they look like the silhouettes of warriors, of advanced sentinels of some army corps! . . . Now, my boys, if you like, we will all go to sleep. . . ."

Next morning the weather was extremely fine.

"I love the sea," said he, with a radiant face; "on it I enjoy such thorough independence. When I am on my boat, no one can hunt me out. Nothing is so delightful as our mornings, our evenings here. Nevertheless I often think of the sea at Étretat, of my excursions with the sailors, with friends, often in awful weather. Nothing stopped us, we enjoyed climbing up monstrous waves on our fishing-smack, so as to go out to fetch turbot, or herrings, according to the season. . . ."

On the 4th of August, at seven in the morning, I served my master's breakfast in the drawing-room,

of which the window looked on the harbour of St Tropez and the bay, just now all wrinkled by the east wind. My master tells me he has slept better in his room on land than on the yacht.

"Really, Raymond is too noisy a sleeper, his snores are so powerful that they seem to follow the ribs of the boat and reach my ears with their vibrations, as if they were brought along by some electric wire ; and that is anything but agreeable. . . ."

He walks while he talks, and eats a roll ; he goes from one end to the other of the room, which is long, then looks out of the window, and wipes his eyes. They are very red, those poor eyes ! . . .

On August the 5th the *Bel-Ami* leaves at two o'clock the harbour of St Tropez. There is a good east wind, we glide along easily. My master tells Bernard to go as near as possible to Sainte-Maxime, as he intends to land in the small-boat and see his father. . . . Bernard of course would not refuse, but he did not like nearing the north-eastern coast of the bay of St Tropez, knowing the difficulties that may arise in those parts when manœuvring by an east wind. He managed to sail towards the sea on the right, then steered towards the coast.

We were then opposite the Sainte Maxime semaphore, which rises above the sea, whereas the coast recedes on the side of the bay of St Tropez. The keeper is a relation of Raymond's. I hoisted all the flags and my master conversed with this State official, who lives in a hut perched on a high point of the coast. Among other things he told my master he expected

that afternoon a visit from M. de Maupassant's father.

The conversation was over, and my master was exploring the coast with the telescope, when he saw someone waving a white handkerchief in the air—He recognised his father.

"How oddly," he exclaimed, "he is waving that handkerchief about! It is not meant as a greeting, for he waves it from left to right, very fast, just like a signal of distress."

I was forward on the yacht, Bernard joined me, he gave one look at the sea, and bounded into the middle of the boat, ordering a manœuvre. My master jumped on to the helm Raymond was holding and, in an instant, the slim *Bel-Ami* had turned on its left, like a bark revolving on itself. Then we saw on our right how dark the water looked; rocks which it hardly covered gave it this tint. And that was why my master's father was waving his handkerchief so desperately! He knew them well, those treacherous reefs. . . .

Here, the seaman's eye Bernard was always boasting about, saved us from a very bad pass, and the supple *Bel-Ami* avoided breaking its beautiful ribs on those rocks, which were so near the surface of the water. The disaster might have happened under the flag, under the very eyes of the keeper of the semaphore, who was talking to us but a minute ago!

Then we sailed towards the open sea. My master, while drinking his tea, assured us that at the worst, we could have reached land in the small boat. . . .

He spoke very calmly, almost with indifference. Then he begged Bernard to return early enough for him to take his walk.

The day after this excursion he told me to order a victoria with two horses for three o'clock. . . . During the drive, he said, without any preface, that he had begun to write *L'Âme Étrangère*, and thought it would be a good novel, perhaps rather sensational.

We skirted the gulf at a trot till we reached Piu-Bertrand. A few people are seated under the pine, others contemplate its gigantic size. . . . We turned about for more than an hour, following devious narrow paths leading now and then to cultivated fields or vine plantations. There are also a good many bushes and much uncultivated ground. Here we are at the end of our drive, we have reached the valley of Pampelone. There is a change of scene; all is cheerful. Our carriage is put up at an inn, almost entirely hid under a fig-tree. It is the same with every house on this country-side, all nestle behind orange-trees or palm-trees; some are covered with vines hanging about them most gracefully.

We take a path leading up towards the west and pass a wooden bridge under which unseen waters murmur their song. It is a rivulet entirely covered by aquatic plants (a kind of water lily finding its dwelling there), they flourish well and are of a tender green. One longed to pluck them. On the left we follow another path which takes us to the seashore, to the cove which bears the name of this valley.

There my master stops a moment, enjoying the sight of the sea.

"How beautiful!" he exclaims; "that view is matchless! Here I find the sea has more charm, more poetical beauty than I have ever seen anywhere else! Look at the grace of that undulating motion. And this thin wave, how lightly it dies away on that belt of white sand! It is no longer the fight, the struggle taking place elsewhere between the two elements, but a sort of caress, so soft that one might think they are wonderfully pleased with their meeting. . . ."

On the right is the terrace anchorage, sheltered by Cap Camarat; we have passed it sometimes. . . .

My master was silent, his radiant face showed what he felt in presence of Nature's splendour. He began walking on the fine sand of the beach, in the direction of the centre of the valley, advancing quickly, holding his white parasol tightly in his right hand; now and then, during a short pause, he would take off his blue glasses, and then walk on in silence. He seemed to have forgotten my presence.

I walked occasionally by his side, sometimes behind him, taking great care not to speak, not to disturb him during his moments of inspiration, which I had witnessed so often; I was aware his thoughts were then hard at work. He was storing up impressions, and fixing in that magical memory of his all he saw; not a single detail was forgotten; nothing escaped that scrutinising eye of his! I thought: "In a year, later perhaps, he will express in a few sublime pages

the poetry of this scenery, which is now causing such a deep impression on his artistic and literary faculties; and by those pages, he will soothe the heart and the mind of those who love Beauty and Truth. . . ."

When we returned to the carriage, he begged the coachman not to drive too quick. We reached the platform on that height which separates the vale of Pampelone from the bay of St Tropez. My master stood up in the victoria, throwing a long look on the whole of the country-side we had gone through.

"What a delicious sojourn one could make in that valley!" he exclaimed, sitting down again.

He then described to me the discovery of Étretat by Alphonse Karr, author of *La Pénélope Normande* and by Offenbach, creator of the *operetta* and composer of *Orphée aux enfers*, who was one of the first to cause a villa to be built half-way on the road to Fécamp.

We reached the northern side; before us spread the bay of St Tropez in all its beauty, under a red sun tinting it with a faint light of the same hue. On the other side, a forest of cork-trees was visible; down below, on the shore, they looked grey, but the tops, on the horizon, took a green velvety tint delightful to the eye.

In the evening, my master described our drive to his sailors, and Bernard told him the anchorage of *La Terrasse* is anything but secure; that it is exposed to the east wind, and that seamen have baptised the

cove of Pampelone by the name of the Bay of Death, on account of the vast number of boats lost on its sands.

"It is beautiful but treacherous, then," says my master.

Next morning we were already on board the *Bel-Ami* by nine o'clock, my master wishing to get out to sea "as far as possible," said he to Bernard. Suddenly a trumpet, some distance off, sounded in the fields. . . . My master, seated aft, was reading his paper.

"Is St Tropez going to fight?" said he, laughing. "There does not exist a single forage-cap about the place, even the rural constable goes his rounds, with a squash hat on his head!"

Omnibuses drove up, and remained in rows on the quays—then a number of women came along, they were dressed in light colours, and wore white sun-bonnets, which looked as if the slightest breeze would blow them away. They carried large parcels that were placed on the tops of the omnibuses. The trumpet sounded again and they all rushed to the vehicles, outside, inside, they were everywhere, even next the drivers. Then they all began to sing in the tongue of *Mireille*. The song was sweet though high, and was like a *Chant du Départ*, but not in the least war-like. Raymond explained to us these were workwomen going off to pick orange-blossoms at Cogolin, where the traffic in those flowers is very important. This unexpected and pretty sight amused my master, who began to tell us about the exodus

of Normans, who go harvesting from one land to another.

St Raphael, August 11th, 1890.—It is easier to reach this harbour, which is deeper in the sea than that of St Tropez. The heat is tremendous ; so the slightest breeze is welcome, and one can the better enjoy it.

In the early morning my master walks into the woods of Boulouris, hoping to find a little coolness there. He passes and repasses by the shady avenue connecting St Raphael with Fréjus. According to him there is always some air there, whatever the weather may be. He has baptised this road by the name of *The Zephyr of Fréjus*.

He continues taking his meals on board, but we pass the nights at an hotel surrounded with pine-trees. The garden follows the towing-path along the sea-side ; there is no beach here ; the garden, the path, and the water are all on the same level. When it blows a little from the south, the roots of the pine-trees bordering the path are bathed by salt water, which does not seem to harm them. From the windows of his room my master has a view of the ocean ; at a cable's length out at sea there are beautiful porphyry rocks of a magnificent red colour ; their shape resembles the outline of two lions warning the sea not to encroach on them.

On the 12th the day has been so oppressive that in the evening we are loth to leave the deck, where we have spent part of the day under the tent. Raymond has found time for his siesta ; now he is inclined to chat, and he tells us a yarn about the sailor, sur-



IN AN ALGERIAN BY-WAY

named *Patience*, because he never had been impatient for a single minute.

To-day, which is the 15th, we sail while it is cool, taking advantage of the first breeze sent us by the bay of Fréjus; and we spend the whole day on the sea. It is delightful on that blue sea, there is enough wind for sailing; at half past three in the afternoon I bring my master his tea.

"What, already!" says he. "I am so comfortable here I am not aware time passes."

He wants us to take tea with him; he praises this wholesome drink, and is pleased to find we agree with him. Then he explains that we are very nearly on the spot where, in 1800, Admiral Baudin fought against the English, who are known to be great tea-drinkers.

He takes the helm, and Bernard says I have as yet told them nothing to make them laugh. Then I ask my master if I may again speak of the Breton customs.

"Certainly," says he, "there is always something original about Breton habits."

Bernard and Raymond, who wanted me to make them laugh, listened open-mouthed to my story that they call a fable. I insist on the fact being true; then they split with laughter.

"The customs of that country are curious," says my master, "but there is always something worth recollecting."

Raymond goes up the main-mast so as to undo a cord caught in a hook. Bernard sits starboard close to the netting, in the attitude of a frog about to jump into the water. He is listening, and examining part

of the woodwork, which makes a disagreeable crackling noise. At last, all is repaired, and the "great white bird" is flying speedily toward its nest. We return to St Raphael; the sun has not yet disappeared entirely behind the chain of the Moorish mountains. My master, looking at the Argens Valley, says :—

"How interesting is the view of that valley just when twilight is falling, and the heat mists are floating over it! Many recollections are connected with it. Those marshes, now kitchen gardens, were in former days a Roman harbour. The Crusaders often started from it; and after the Eastern and Italian wars the Kings of France several times took refuge there with their fleets. One could write something fine with all the reminiscences of the old city of Fréjus; but I can't undertake everything. My head now represents a builder's yard filled with materials for several years' work. It is here, in this pretty frame, that Gounod composed *Roméo et Juliette*."

On reaching the harbour Bernard gave the order to cast the anchor. Raymond executed this manœuvre with the necessary promptitude and regularity, and the *Bel-Ami*, with extraordinary suppleness, turned round, placing her stern at seven feet from the quay, neither more nor less, just at the distance of the length of the plank.

On August the 20th my master went to *Maison Close* to pay a visit to M. Alphonse Karr. He tells me we shall start for Nice the first day there is a favourable wind.

August 22nd, Nice.—One cannot breathe in Nice harbour as freely as in that of St Raphael: M. de Maupassant walks about on deck; the sailors say he is taking the watch, and does not seem satisfied. He looks at the mountains.

"I do not want to see what is near me," says he. "My eyes can seek afar something that pleases me, but my sense of smell cannot do the same. This harbour reeks too much of trade for a man of my temperament."

He lunches at the Villa des Ravenelles with Madame de Maupassant, and his usual good temper returns when his mother tells him she feels so well in her garden, that her health is much stronger, she can sleep without taking chloral, and sees sufficiently to be able to read.

In the afternoon he stops on the path opposite the kitchen. He is close to the trunk of an old tree, where there is a large ant-hill; suddenly he calls me; armed with his eye-glass and lens, he watches these insects at work, and admires their way of living.

"There are no sovereigns among them," says he; "work is distributed carefully, and each does its part with pride, there is never any disorder; each keeps to its own business; the workers build the galleries, and have to feed the females about to lay their eggs, and whose wings they have torn off when they return from their short honeymoon. But that is not all, the males are put to death after a single interview, what do you think of that?"

He watched all the evolutions of these laborious insects ; he did not seem to approve of these speedy executions, but he would have liked to have witnessed one, and to have beheld the ants carrying the bodies into the mortuary chamber, where they leave them to become mummies.

Little Simone, my master's godchild, comes up to him, she jumps on to her swing, which she launches quite violently. Her godfather tells her to go more gently, he is afraid of her falling.

On the second day of our stay at Nice, the *Bel-Ami* weighs anchor after lunch and is moored in the evening behind Cannes jetty. That is best for my master, as the place boasts of excellent water.

Lyons. — The reason of our visiting Lyons in November 1890 is that my master's brother died here prematurely a year ago. He lived in a pretty village beyond the bridges which span the two large rivers flowing through the town. My master had the deepest affection for his brother. He proved it to him, in many circumstances, by the paternal advice he gave him.

It is only eleven, and we have lunched. A carriage comes to fetch us, and conveys us to the house of a man who works at monuments. All is already settled ; but my master wishes for more information about the perpetual grant of the ground. We then cross the river and reach the country. Probably, during that drive, I spoke too much of what I saw on the road, for my master is not interested, and hardly replies. He is thoughtful, and his eyes seem to seek afar off what they do not find. Then I remain mute ; there is

nothing but the deep silence of the country. Thus the carriage rolls on for an hour.

Suddenly M. de Maupassant puts the glass down; a gesture shows me a house on the left surrounded by trees.

"It is in that dwelling," says he in a tone he tries to keep steady, "that my poor brother died."

Ten minutes later we reach a pretty country church; then we enter the cemetery containing M. Hervé's sepulchre. It is a black marble tomb on which golden letters mark the name and the age of he whose remains rest there for ever. . . . The monument is in very good taste, and imposing by its very simplicity.

Raising my head I saw the beautiful panorama beneath this cemetery. My master remains motionless and silent. I take a few steps, and risk a word or two to make him look at the scenery; but he does not seem to hear me, his face has taken that violet hue which always betrays, with him, a violent emotion. He does not shed tears, but his countenance is convulsed, and my heart is wrung by his suffering without a word, without a sob.

"That tomb is as it should be," says he at last; "its rounded form will allow the rains from heaven to purify it."

The hand holding his stick moves nervously. I try to lead him out of the mournful enclosure; he follows me without speaking, jumps into the carriage, and sinks into the corner. He always seems to be looking out afar, but he sees nothing.

We return the way we came. When he sees his

brother's house, he repeats several times the same word :

" It is there ! . . . "

Then, with an impetuous flow of words, he tells me the principal episodes of the life of the one he mourns for, and I find a resemblance between these two beings, yet so different in many points. He praises his brother, regretting that he refused to go in for diplomacy, a career on which his gifts would have been useful. M. Hervé insisted, instead, on cultivating flowers and standing in his gardens, his head uncovered in the summer sun, he twice had sunstroke. Again, my master is silent. . . . On each side of the carriage I see two long light lines between high walls. It is the Rhone running towards a milder climate, as if it tried to escape from the fog weighing it down.

My master is still quite absorbed, and we reach the hotel. I give him some very hot tea. He walks up and down his room and begins to talk of his brother.

" I saw him die," said he. " According to the doctors, his end was to have come a day sooner ; but he waited for me, he would not depart without seeing me again, without saying good-bye. . . . Perhaps : ' Let us meet again ' . . . Who knows ? When I had embraced him he said twice very loud ' Guy ! dear Guy ! ' as he used to do in the garden of Verguies when he called me for a game of play. . . . I wiped with my handkerchief his poor dimmed eyes, of which the beautiful blue colour had disappeared. A sign he made led me to think he wanted me to lower my hand, and then he touched it with his lips. . . . Ah !

poor fellow, how sincere his friendship was . . . and really he was very young when he was taken from us ! ”

My master's sorrow was very deep at that moment. . . . He did not go out that evening, and next morning after visiting the little hill of Fourvières we returned to Paris.

CHAPTER XVII

FROM NOVEMBER 1890 TILL THE END OF OCTOBER
1891

The lady with the pearl-grey silk dress—Invited to the Italian Court—Severe judgment on the idleness of the higher classes—Plan of work—Flight to the Côte d'Azur—The mysterious villa—The *Figaro's* last article—*The Angelus*—Alarming symptoms increase—Disappointment about the stage—The exactions of a star—M. Piot Verdier—No gew-gaws—Journey to Arles in search of Mireille—The counterpart in a convent of *Titian's Lady* at Florence—Walks in Avignon—No music!—Details on the composition of the *Angelus*—Nîmes and the Tour Magne—The Bridge on the Gard—Eulogium of Roman hygiene—One cannot sleep at Toulouse—Treatment attempted at Bagnères de Luchon—Sulphurous smells do not agree with my master any more than they did in Sicily—At Divonne—The haunted house—War on the mice!—Unexpected physical improvement—Sunstroke and bicycle accident—The romance of Andréy and the beautiful Madame X—Trout fishing.

WE are settled again in the rue Boccador. The lady of the pearl-grey dress and golden waist-band is come again. After we had tried everything, my master only got to sleep this morning at three. While the mustard poultices were on, I was seated against the wall close to the window, and there, leaning my head against the large curtain, I counted the quarters, half-hours and hours struck so distinctly by the little travelling clock. . . .

My master has just received a letter from the Court of Italy, it is a most flatteringly worded invitation from Her Majesty the Queen. He is going to accept it ; he seems quite happy at the idea of getting such a close view of the two sovereigns' lives. With a hearty laugh he says he hopes " those people " progress with the times, and have thrown to the winds all prejudices against daily baths !

November 25th.—My master went yesterday to Rouen to inaugurate M. Flaubert's monument. This morning he examines the small plaster model after which the work has been sculptured, and which represents the features of his literary godfather. But he does not seem satisfied.

" Did you see the nasty, cold, grey weather I had during my journey ? I really do not know why, but it becomes more and more disagreeable to me to talk to people I do not esteem."

We hung the plaster medallion above a door inside the drawing-room.

The Paris temperature is trying when one is accustomed to hot climates ; my master feels cold, even in his fur coat, and thus is obliged to take a carriage to pay his visits, which provokes him. He is so fond of walking ! He still accepts a few invitations to dinner, but refuses evening parties, where the lights tire his eyes. He goes out as little as possible in the evening, and rests. He does not even read ; after dinner he comes occasionally to the door of the kitchen.

" In France," he tells me during one of these visits ; " there are about forty or forty-two thousand young

fellows of good family ; it is extremely rare that one of them tries to leave the ranks of the idlers ; and that is from sheer laziness. That old racial aristocracy, which had a certain historical value, was destroyed by the guillotine. Now I can't enter a drawing-room (in good society) without hearing groups advocating idleness for the 'golden youths' and advising them against activity, thus consigning them to ruin and poverty. Everywhere in the world I see a violent current rising and about to swallow up all members of society who don't know how to defend themselves by the wholesome habits resulting from steady work. Work is such a delightful thing as long as health lasts ! I do not know, but I really think I could not give up work. The want of it is innate with me. Sometimes I may have said I only worked because I wanted money. It is not quite true, there are things I love to write about. All the same, when I shall have finished the novels and tales I am now busy with, I shall draw out a sort of general analysis of my work, and review the great writers I think I have known how to understand. It will be a restful occupation for me, and of great interest for the young—I think it will not tire me, and that I shall have the great pleasure of re-reading the things that have most contributed to my intellectual satisfaction.

“ As an appendix, I intend giving my opinion on the evolution which I think will be produced in France among the different classes during the twentieth century.”

End of February.—My master suddenly resolves that

we shall start for Nice where the boat is awaiting us, quite equipped for sailing.

It is in a garden all planted with orange-trees that my master takes a flat, half-way between the harbour and Madame de Maupassant's house. His first nights are rather good, which he attributes to the neighbourhood of the orange-trees, best of soothing draughts.

Ten days later we sail away on the *Bel Ami*. All that is necessary for a long journey is on board ; the guns, the American rifles, and a new compass, much more important than the old one. My master has studied it to make the course out. The lights also have been renewed. We go out to sea one morning by a stiff east wind, and in the afternoon the *Bel Ami* finds his friend the *Ville de Marseille* again near the Cannes jetty, where my master lands. He follows the shore alongside the pleasure-boats moored near the beach, which resemble a town of little white houses. Their masts spring up like miniature spires ; they might be chimneys. . . .

My master still walks along the beach, and just before the baths, his figure disappears in a garden, bordering the Croisette road, of a villa with gilt balconies in a nest of green. I can still see the illustrious author putting his hand on the banister and climbing towards the low story, from which we can see the horizon. He was going to revisit the lady of the pearl-grey dress, always so calm, so silent, so enigmatical. . . .

After two days' rest the *Bel Ami* hoists its colours ; they fly, making a curious noise under the pressure of the wind, as if saying good-bye. Quickly we pass

by Cap Roux, Agay, St Raphaël, all those pretty places where, during past years, our yacht rested so pleasantly. Next day we gave a passing salute to Porquerolles, and in the evening we reached the old Marseilles harbour, and I ask myself if the *Bel Ami* knows again its quarters. Anyhow, the most cunning inhabitant of Marseilles would not now recognise the *ex-Zingara*.

Every morning for a week I walk with my master to the Prado by the rue de Rome, then to the Corniche which we travel over from end to end, before that beautiful sea which was always of so imposing an aspect. Often we lunch at the Restaurant de la Réserve, after which we walk out to the public park.

M. de Maupassant seems tired; the *Bel Ami* is ready to start for Seville and Tangiers according to former plans; but the Golfe du Lion is terrible; ever since our arrival its waters are agitated, and in the papers, meteorological authorities announce a lengthy period of bad weather. Notwithstanding all these disagreeable warnings, the *Bel Ami* one day leaves the harbour of Marseilles; in those treacherous parts, the water forms enormous and threatening waves. My master gives the order to sail towards the coasts of Provence, abandoning, I think, with some vexation, the idea of those of Spain.

Here we are back in Garibaldi's country; in our large apartment surrounded with sweet-smelling shrubs, M. de Maupassant seems bored; the crowds in the Nice streets tire him. We often lunch at Madame de Maupassant's, and then, following the

seashore, we reach the harbour where the *Bel Ami* is ready for a sail. When the weather allows of it, we manœuvre before Villefranche, giving a glance to Beaulieu, which is growing every day more beautiful. For the sake of variety, we sail another day to the Cap d'Antibes ; and when my master has again admired the îles de Lerins and in the distance Cannes,—which forms a green circle spotted with white ; its old square tower on Mont Chevalier in ruins, bright with red shining tiles, yet with a mournful aspect created by the assaults of past centuries and of the *mistral*, which dies at its very feet, we turn towards the open sea, so as to anchor before the city of Masséna.

To-day, during the sail, my master allowed me for a long time to keep the helm. That is because he is finishing his article : *Un Empereur*, for the *Figaro*. Who would have thought, seeing him so quick at his work, that it was the last article he would write for that paper, for it was without any trouble apparently that he composed this short tale ! From that moment he put aside his *l'Ame Étrangère*, and only worked at one single composition, his *Angelus*.

One night in April he called me to him. He felt ill, and would not allow me to leave him for a minute ; so I made him a cup of camomile tea in his spirit-kettle in his bedroom. When the sun rose I was still near him. But in the morning he felt better ; his faintness had disappeared, and we spent the day in the air as usual. That evening he told me the heat was coming on and that I might prepare everything for our return to Paris ; a few days later he said good-

bye to his mother, and we took the *Rapide* in the evening.

My master has been quite reasonable during the six weeks we have just spent in Paris, taking all the necessary time to care for his health without infringing for a single day the new regulations. He is therefore better, and is even a little stouter; his face looks healthier. He offers a lunch in honour of the two MM. Coquelin of the *Comédie-Française*.

"I think," says he, "I have found the subject of a play which will suit them both, and also suit their theatre, and I have invited them expressly to have their opinion. Those two men are sincere, I can submit a sketch to them, trusting in their good sense."

In this sentence he alluded to the disappointments often afforded him by actors. Some writers have blamed my master for not following their advice and writing for the stage, they multiplied their efforts against what they called his prejudices; few of them knew that my master had not been very well treated by the world of the footlights. He wrote a play in three acts in 1886. He had begun by settling everything with the lady who was to take the leading part. He was well acquainted with her style, her talent; the play really was made for her. The parts were all copied out and distributed, it was time to begin rehearsing. Then the lady exacted terms the manager could not accept. She asked for each representation a sum which came to more than half the receipts, my master offered to give up the sum total of his author's rights



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to satisfy the Star; but all was in vain, and the play remained in the drawer of his bureau.

He talked of this incident.

"I only regret," said he, "this disaster, on account of that excellent fellow, Raymond Deslandes. He is such a perfect gentleman, he showed such kindness about the whole business! What a bore it must have been to fail, after all his endeavours. As to me, this disappointment turned me away from the stage, I went back to my novels and tales. They are, after all, what I prefer, it amuses me to compose them. Still," added he, after a pause, "I should have thought that woman had more sense. She seemed so sincere as we talked. I can see her still, seated on my divan, listening to me so gracefully, holding in her hand the corner of a cushion, and pressing it as if to give emphasis to her answers. I must confess she had produced an excellent impression on me; later on, I understood she was as good an actress in private life as on the stage. I was naïf enough to fear that a particular perfume she preferred was too strong, I thought it must do her harm. . . ."

M. Piot Verdier, my master's shirtmaker, came to deliver the dayshirts and nightshirts we had ordered. The first fit well and please him, because they are very simple, it is not so with the nightshirts that M. Piot Verdier, thinking he is right, has trimmed with a coloured frill.

"No, no," says my master, "I won't have those ornaments; take them off and I will accept the nightshirts. If you wish to please me, always give me the

simplest of articles, they must be plain, no gew-gaws; you'll put the monogram under the fold, that will do."

On the 22nd October, M. Piot Verdier brings worsted socks and drawers of a drab colour; they are warm English articles which please my master. He gives his card to the shirtmaker bearing his address: *Chalet de l'Isère, Cannes*; that is where the flannel waistcoats he has ordered are to be sent.

On June the 27th M. de Maupassant takes a journey towards the Cévennes mountains, intending afterwards to follow a course of baths at Luchon.

We reach Arles.

"We are here in Gallic Rome, this town is celebrated for the beauty of its women, I hope to see here some handsome faces!"

We are in an hotel, on a square which is not remarkable in any way. In the morning we go into the street, up to the church-doors—we visit St Trophime, of which my master admires the façade. In the narrow street we see women whose large cloaks and coifs are flapping in the wind.

Neither the celebrated Arles cap, nor its black velvet ribbon, nor the white crown that surmounts it, give these women that queenly aspect master expected.

"It is pretty because of its simplicity," says he. "But there is nothing aristocratic about it . . . yet it is here Mistral wrote *Mireille*." Thus the day passed away without our having set eyes on the hoped-for beauty.

At nine next morning a "M. Oscar" is there to guide us. Where to, I do not know. As we leave the hotel,

he makes us ascend by a winding street and we reach the Arena in a few minutes ; he tells us about it, always coming back to the Romans.

Then we find ourselves on a height on which rises a kind of quaint public square. This part of Arles is in a very sad state, the houses are tumbling down without any attempt apparently being made to repair them. It looks as if one were in a deserted city, not at all like the celebrated town which sometimes has been called the French Pompeii. My master looks morose as he contemplates the sad sight.

About a hundred-and-twenty yards further, M. Oscar knocks at a varnished door studded with large black-headed nails, surmounted by a capital shaped like a pointed arch ; modern, I think. A grated peep-hole is opened, our guide says a few words, and we are allowed to go in. We are in a convent. We are led to a circular room which does duty as a parlour. A very old sister, who can hardly walk, comes to us. My master bows very low. She makes a show of taking him by the hand, and pushes open a door before her. Both disappear.

How long did they remain away ? I cannot exactly say, the time passed slowly. When my master returned, we went out immediately, and walked quietly down a very steep street, at the bottom of which our guide M. Oscar took leave of us.

Now we follow the delta of the Camargue, and my master cannot restrain himself from expressing his delight.

“ What I have seen in that convent is more beauti-

ful, more artistic than anything I have yet beheld ! It is perhaps finer than *Titian's Lady* at Florence. What I have just seen surpasses everything, everything. . . ."

We spent the morning of the 20th at Tarascon. We visited the crypt of the first Romanesque church, which is most interesting, and then King René's castle. In the afternoon we listened to some music on the Cours des Papes at Avignon. There were numerous pretty women, some very young and fresh, who made up a pleasing sight, and suggested to my master some happy remarks ; but the music began again, which bored him.

"That music," said he, "is too noisy—I don't like it . . ."

"His nerves are too sensitive just now," thought I, as we walked towards the Rhone, "for he has written in *Fort comme la Mort* :

" ' Music is a mystery that penetrates the body, maddens the nerves and the soul with a real and poetical fever, by mingling a wave of sound we listen to with the clear air we breathe."

After glancing at the Pope's Palace, we crossed the Rhone and visited the ancient city of Villeneuve d'Avignon. We returned to Avignon, after recrossing the river which flows so majestically, and which, from the bridge, one can see meandering along, far away. We beheld a large chapel : *Notre Dame des Doms* on a terrace on our left, which rises above the square and the Pope's Palace.

"Let us go in," says my master, "sometimes inside

those old monuments there are things worth looking at, such as painted glass windows, etc."

After going round the church, we saw a hall on the left, near the entrance, and there, in a glass shrine, a life-size recumbent female saint.

My master looked at it with that attention he always shows when wanting to understand a thing thoroughly.

"That statue," says he in a loud tone, "was the work of an Italian artist. In France, we do not know how to produce such artistic finish."

Going out, he gives some silver to the woman who looks after the holy water, and she tells him the pretty saint Nevie Félicité he has just admired was offered to this church by Pope Pius the Ninth.

As we returned to the station, my master looked right and left towards the narrow streets in which one can perceive Gothic monuments. In the evening he says we can go back to Nîmes.

"Later on," said he, "when M. Dumas asks me where I found my woman's face, it will be amusing to tell him 'In a shrine at *Notre Dame des Doms*, of Avignon. . . .' I confess I have not found in that figure all I want for my type of a woman. Still I saw in that expression of face the uncut diamond I have to polish. I perceived some artistic details which will be of use for carving my subject, that I hope to make very striking, as near perfection as possible. In my *Angelus* I intend to give all the power of expression of which I am capable, every detail will be cared for most minutely without tiring the reader. I feel very well-disposed to write this

book, the subject of which I possess completely, and which I have conceived with surprising facility. It will be the crowning-piece of my literary career, I am convinced its qualities will awaken such enthusiasm in the artistic reader that he will ask himself if he is in presence of reality or fiction."

Nîmes, July 1st.—My master photographs the principal Roman monuments, and we ascend the Tour Magne, on the top of Mont Cavalier. The panorama we see from the platform is really marvellous; my master did not know how to leave off admiring it. . . .

At eight next morning our carriage rolls on the broad white road leading to the Pont du Gard. Some battalions of artillery going to Nîmes for a review, advance in such a thick cloud of dust that we can see nothing. My master coughs slightly, but does not complain; all his attention is attracted by the cannon crossing our path. Two hundred paces before we reach the restaurant of the Pont du Gard, we hear on our left the cries of frightened fowls in the bushes. My master jumps out of the carriage and runs towards the spot whence come the screams of the poor birds. I follow him, and on the edge of the path we see a fox flying as hard as he can, carrying a hen away. My master is sorry not to have his gun. . . .

We reach the bridge, we admire the majesty of the works the Romans have bestowed on this part of France. To climb to the top there is a choice of several winding paths. I take one of these, carrying the photographic apparatus, a set of films and a

telescope ; I reach the platform before my master who probably had chosen a more difficult path. When he saw I was in advance, he made an evident effort to reach the summit, not an easy matter, I confess. He takes a photograph of the bridge on the side of the Louis XIV. footbridge ; then we go from one end to the other of the narrow passage on the top of the bridge which connects the two uncultivated banks of this torrent. From there we look over the surrounding woods. What my master told me at that moment was most interesting. He enumerated the episodes which took place on that bridge about the end of the fourth century, as soon as it was built ; then he praised the utility of this aqueduct, bringing the waters drawn from the Eure at Nîmes.

"What a lesson !" he exclaimed, "nothing was impossible to the Romans when it was a question of public health. Besides their prodigious works, they constructed baths everywhere which were open gratuitously to all. Ah ! they were practical people ! It is sad to think that goodly process of regeneration by water they had shown us should be lost ; our race would have been much improved by it."

We spent half a day at Cette, then went to Toulouse, where we put up at the Hotel Tivollier rue d'Alsace-Lorraine.

In the early morning my master already is at his bedroom window ; he is looking at the sky and asks me if I think the day will be fine. I answer that knowing nothing about this region I can't give him my opinion, but that if I were in a northern country

I should tell him that a dry morning without any dew, such as this one, with the rising sun drinking up the mists, means generally a rainy afternoon.

My master then asked if I had seen the Capitol.

"No, sir; I do not know why, but I like neither the people or the things of this country. Perhaps it is because in my youth I had to stand during three years the presence of a man from Toulouse; such a boaster, that my nerves quite gave way!"

My master does not sleep well in this hotel, there are too many mosquito-nets, curtains and hangings. So, notwithstanding the tremendous heat, he travels all day to reach Bagnères de Luchon, where he thinks it is better to take an apartment during the time his treatment lasts. I then ask if he had not better wait a little to see if the climate will suit him.

"I think you are right," replied he; "it will also be wiser to see if the treatment suits me."

We made excursions during three days, visiting the waterfalls of Juzet, Montauban, then the Lys Valley and the cascade du Cœur. My master finds these united names auspicious, and laughs, adding a few pleasant remarks about them. We finish our round by the Cascade de l'Enfer, which falls from a great height. We take the left-hand path and reach the glacier, which my master admires while saying he has seen "more imposing ones."

The guide follows us with some difficulty during the ascent, so when we get back to the inn a drink is offered him; he and the coachman are quite surprised to see us leave without taking anything at the bar.

But we feel very hot, and, well wrapped up in our plaids, we go down the fresh and pretty valley, following a brawling stream, the sweet music of which resembled the dainty song of some mysterious divinities far away down in fairy palaces under the earth.

My master spent the fourth day at Luchon, and in the evening, by the doctor's advice, he resolved not to continue the cure. His nervous system cannot stand the sulphurous smells of the baths; and the good Spanish doctor tells him grievous harm might ensue if he persisted in continuing his treatment. Then Luchon is so monotonous! It is a funnel where you cannot breathe, and where you can only see the sun appear at ten o'clock on the top of the mountains. As we do not ride, there is no opportunity of ascending these forbidding-looking mountains so as to see the sun rising on their tops. . . .

My master says to me after the doctor's decree has been pronounced:

"Here the smell of sulphur is strong everywhere. Inside the Bathing Establishment, it is even worse than down in the sulphur mines I explored in Sicily."

Here we are at Divonne-les-Bains. My master wishes to reside rather far from the centre of the town. So we take a lodging in a sort of farm in the country, belonging to a doctor's widow. On the following day, I went to buy provisions in the village, coming back by paths crossing fields planted with oats and golden corn. They were occasionally divided by great stretches of green clover; a light scarlet carpet

with soft violet groundwork spread over them. On the edge of the path, I found clover with four, six and eight leaves, always in even numbers, which according to country people, brings good luck. . . .

M. de Maupassant goes thrice a day by the road to take his shower-bath. But the way is monotonous, it seems lengthy to him ; a few walnut trees stand out on the horizon and look picturesque against the deep blue sky. Mont Blanc is visible at a distance, but it is far away, and when on the road to Divonne, it disappears on the left.

On the fourth morning my master is ready at seven, he goes off to take his shower-bath, I know that during these four nights, he has slept but little. He tells me he hears strange noises in the night, I can well believe it, since wide awake, and seated on a rickety chair that hurts me, I also hear noises I cannot explain. My nervous system is just now rather highly strung certainly, but I have my wits about me, and neither my master nor I know what is commonly called fear. We are indifferent about this house being haunted or not, but all the same, we should like to take some rest. So last night as we could not sleep, and whole groups of mice, like reconnoitring patrols, passed continually before us, the light having no effect on them, we organised some ambuscades to catch these impudent creatures.

Armed with the provision net and a few other weapons invented by my master for the circumstance, we captured thirty-two of these little beasts. They were immediately condemned to the fate of the

martyred St Lawrence. Only, instead of the gridiron, they had the honour of a bon-fire.

"If Piroli were but here, how she would have enjoyed it!" thought I.

My master was only half-pleased by this result, for not a single rat had been taken, and it appears the rats cause this inexplicable noise.

The afternoon following the "burnt sacrifices" I went with my master to Divonne by his favourite path. I told him how superstitious I was about four-leaved clover. This made him laugh, and he began walking so fast I could scarcely follow him. But at the end of a few minutes, he slowed down and stretched out his hand towards a large figure of Christ placed above the cemetery.

"Certainly He was the most intelligent, the most perfect Man that ever appeared on this earth, when one reflects on all He did. And He was only thirty-three when they crucified Him! Napoleon the First, whom I admire, but only for his genius, used to say: 'In all that Man did,—were He God or were He not—there is something mysterious and inexplicable' . . ."

Here he stopped, we were obliged to stand aside so as to allow for the passage of some splendid red cows going to graze.

We reached Divonne, where my master hired half a chalet with a kitchen. We were settled there that very evening, my master's bedroom is on the southern side, the dining-room looks west; all is for the best, and he sleeps better, even from the first night.

After a quiet fortnight in this pretty habitation, my

master seems to have recovered his usual good-humour, and his former health.

His doctor lunches with him one day ; their conversation is merry and animated. I must confess that the doctor added to his professional merit, wit and a tactful philosophy, which much pleased my master. The medical man had over the artist the authority of the scientist, and it was easy to see how beneficial his treatment was. The shower-baths of that icy water, coming down the mountains of France ; that isolated retreat in a corner apparently lost in the immense chain of mountains, on the edge of the Lake of Geneva ; first-rate food ; all combined to restore the health of the celebrated oarsman of Sartrouville, he gets stouter, his complexion is good, he sleeps nearly the whole night ; he calls me only once or twice.

Occasionally my master goes off on a tricycle. The day before yesterday, he went to Voltaire's chateau at Ferney ; to-day, he will go to Prégny, where Baroness de R—— lives, and he gives me a holiday for the afternoon, saying that if the lady invites him, he will remain and dine with her.

I went to take a walk on the road to Gex. But notwithstanding the luck which seemed to smile on us, since my master was so much better, and all the happiness promised by that symbolical clover, I felt nervous and would not go far. I came in at half-past four ; my master appeared at the same time, his face was red, there was evidently a flow of blood to the head. The Baroness was away, and he had taken the journey on his tricycle from Divonne to the gates of Geneva under

a burning sun, absolutely tropical in that valley. He *would* return, without stopping, without taking any rest, and while coming back, overwhelmed by the heat he turned giddy, fell from the machine and hurt two of his ribs. After resting a little under a farm shed, he has the courage to get on to his tricycle again, and there he is, quite miserable, not on account of the pain in his side, but because of the shock this fall (which must have been caused by sunstroke) may communicate to his brain, which had been latterly so clear that he had been able to work with the greatest ease at his *Angelus*.

The doctor is there, he sees the ribs are hurt, and orders that his chest be bandaged up. My master seems quite comforted after this good doctor's visit, but he has a bad night ; several times he unlooses his bandages, and I have to put them on again, which is not so easy. About five in the morning he gets to sleep.

The next night was a little calmer. I was dozing on a chair in the dining-room when I heard the little travelling clock strike two in the morning.

"That's the bad hour," I thought.

And he called me, of course. All kinds of mournful ideas then tortured me, my heart beat as if under the impression of some great disaster ; hardly awake, I had the presentiment misfortunes never come singly.

On the 15th at nine in the morning, a carriage stops before the garden door. A lady gets out. Alas ! my presentiment comes true ! She explains it is to her

journey to Switzerland we owe the honour of her visit.

Six days later, a brougham is again at the door to take the visitor away, but fancy my dismay when suddenly the horse falls down like a mass ! Such an accident might delay the unknown lady's departure, the very worst thing that could happen to my master. Luckily they get the horse up, and the lady my master was so glad to part with, goes back to Geneva.

Now peace must be restored to the tired writer so as he may bestow on us some more masterpieces.

On August the 23rd there was a change in my master's condition ; the doctor lunched here this morning, and found a great improvement in the state of the ribs. That is a point which will not have to be seen to for some days, luckily ; for now there is another vexation.

Two people had hired the rooms next ours ; they had not been there for three days when at night, they made a most unbearable noise,—merry-making no doubt, but not to be endured ! M. de Maupassant then tells me that often he has been obliged at night to go into the open air, so as to get away from the smells with which rooms in hotels reek.

“ Those large barracks where we try to sleep, only separated from strangers by a simple door, often allow you to hear the most extraordinary things. I shall soon write a tale on that very subject, . . . for which I obtained most curious evidence at the hotel de Noailles at Marseilles. . . .”



FORT SANTA CRUZ AND ORAN HARBOUR

To-day we have had some hard work ; I transported my master's bed to the other side of the room—some plaids, blankets and hangings which the landlady kindly gave us are stretched along the partition, separating the two lodgings ; and this thick padding forms a very sufficient insulator. The same noise was repeated on the other nights, but it was softened and one could rest.

While I worked, my master told me how he had become acquainted with Madame X—.

" It was," said he, " during the spring of 1883 ; I was passing in my yawl by Andrésey. After rowing round the island, and throwing a glance on the lock at Fin-d'Oise, I turned round and thought I should like to cool myself and rest a little on that belt of grass surrounded by water. I moor my yawl, and walk into a bush of thorns. That corner was still a species of wilderness at that time ; now people go there as often as to La Jatte. I walk towards an elm with low and spreading branches, promising me a little shade. But on nearing it, I perceive the place is already occupied. I hesitate . . . Is it a man, is it a woman ? Passing at a little distance, I see it is a woman wearing a sailor's hat and a tight-fitting bathing costume.

" At that very moment, she puts a cape over her shoulders, probably because she is chilly. The lady is reading a book ; she is alone—That seemed funny. Is she really alone ? That is the question. Nearer still, I saw she was reading my book, *Une Vie*, with extraordinary attention. That detail, said I to myself, will facilitate an introduction. I began to walk

in the beautiful Andrésy avenue of lime-trees. Towards six in the evening a man comes in a boat to fetch the lady reading on the island. I followed ; other couples, friends evidently, sit with them at a table in the restaurant Chantry. I tell the waiter to put me at a table near enough to see the lady.

" The host tells me she is the wife of the dark gentleman. At first, I am rather put out, then the man comes back and tells me he hears they are about to be separated.

" The unknown lady is pretty, lively, like a Paris *gamin*. Then melancholy thoughts about her come to me. There are two young and handsome people, already tired of each other, who will probably be unhappy for the rest of their days. What a comedy marriage is, such as conventionality has made it ! Would it not be simpler and more just to allow two beings to obey Nature and follow their instincts ?

" A few weeks later, I was on good terms with all these people who loved the water. . . ."

The first days of September are over, and the sun sinks early behind the mountains. We make amends by climbing, one morning on to the heights ; while waiting for the sunrise we follow a pretty river (the Versoix) its cool clear waters flow rapidly towards the valley, carrying off occasionally large stones, and thus showing bright trout with their silvery reflections. Barefoot fishermen are in the water ; they seize with their hands the fish, but these sometimes escape, sailing away just under the surface, and hiding under the first pebble they can find. The sport amused my

master, who had long wished to see the way these delicate fish were taken.

"This pretty scene," says he, "lit up by the sun on mountain and plain, gives me ideas I shall treat in an article for the *Gaulois*."

We are leaving Divonne, my master tells me he has written the sonnet he wished to compose for M. Gounod.

CHAPTER XVIII

FROM THE END OF SEPTEMBER 1891 TILL JULY 3RD,
1893

The clear-sighted sympathy of Professor G. . . —The fatal visit —A very serious consultation—Departure for Cannes—At the "Chalet de l'Isère"—Doctor Daremberg—The fatal illness progresses slowly—Haunted by sad thoughts—*Le Moine de Fécamp*—Part of a sole in the lung—Symptoms of ataxy—Memory very clear—Increase of brain-fatigue—The mosquitoes —A sad New Year's Day—Last family meeting—The fatal telegram from the East—M. de Maupassant cuts his throat —He is aware of his condition—A terrible watch—The idea of revenge on the Germans haunts the patient—At the house of Dr Blanche at Passy—Momentary hope of a cure—What Dr Blanche feared takes place—Mad terror of persecution—Flashes of good sense—How Fate decides!—It is on account of a sojourn in Switzerland that M. de Maupassant ends his days in a madhouse.

SEPTEMBER 18th, 1891.—We are delighted to return to the comfortable apartment in the rue Boccador. M. de Maupassant expresses his regret at not being able to take with him when he travels, all the familiar things he loves, which he is in the habit of seeing and touching every day, "above all my bed," says he, "for nowhere can I find its equal."

On the 19th he comes back to dinner, apparently in excellent spirits. He has been to see an eminent Professor of the Medical Faculty, who for years, has watched over his health.

"Doctor G——" says he, "has found me in very good condition ; I have told him what I think of Divonne ; he agrees with me, it is the treatment that suits me the best. Of which this result is a proof."

This professor, a most kind-hearted man, had been my master's friend for years ; he treated him with fatherly affection, seeming to look on him as a boy without any experience. A year ago, my master went to Cannes without me, and told me an incident that happened there.

"I was coming home," said he, "with Dr G—— one evening to that dull hotel situated in a sort of hollow between the road to Grasse and the boulevard du Cannet. The night was dark, the air of that valley is oppressive, and smells of the marshes, a kind of wretchedness floated in the air. Why were we staying there ? I do not know ; anyhow, as we were walking conversation turned on my health. I told the good Doctor something of what the author of *Bel-Ami* had been in his youth, what an intrepid oarsman I was. And I told him all I feel now. Then he, speaking like a father to his son, said the kindest things one could hear coupled with advice, so severe but so clear, that the most indifferent of minds could not fail to be impressed. When we shook hands before separating, I observed that large tears were rolling down the thin cheeks of the man whose kind words had moved me so deeply ; I felt the spontaneous desire of wiping with my lips those tears, the noblest my wet eyes had ever beheld. . . ."

He paused.

"That is the only instance," added he, "in the whole course of my life, that I have felt the wish of throwing myself into a man's arms. . . ."

On the 20th of September, at two in the afternoon, the electric bell (of which the wires have not been renewed for several months) rings in an uncertain way. I open the door and find myself face to face with the woman who has already done such harm to my master. As usual, she passes, rigid, and enters the drawing-room without her marble countenance showing the slightest change. I go to my room, cross and unhappy. Ought I not to warn this fatal visitor, reproach her with the crime she is committing with such unconcern, put her to the door without any ceremony? . . . But, since my master consented to receive her, I could only bow down to her. . . . I may now confess how deeply I regret not having had the courage of sending that *vampire* away! My master would still be living. . . .

In the evening, he seems tired and does not mention this visit.

On October the 17th, at eleven in the evening, the eminent Professor who is so kind to my master, sends Doctor D—— to him, for he is suffering greatly. After some cordial conversation on both sides, the Doctor leaves, and I continue watching till four in the morning. He sinks into a deep sleep, then I go to rest a little.

He is not so well on the 19th of October; I might say he has lost all he had gained by the Divonne treatment. Doctor D—— has been to see him, also

Professor G—— who has requested a consultation for the day after to-morrow.

As I go into the bedroom, I look at the masterpiece of Rodin which decorates the chimney, representing a wicked-faced Chimera carrying off an unfortunate victim ; on this group is placed the paper covered with the notes for the doctors' perusal ; they are to read them, and decide their diagnosis of my master's health. . . .

It is three in the afternoon, the doctors are there. They pass from the drawing-room where I conducted them into the study with my master. A few minutes later they return into the drawing-room ; the whole did not last half an hour. I study with anxiety M. de Maupassant's countenance ; he does not seem at all frightened by the diagnosis, but he looks bored, his complexion is that of one of his bad days. I venture to ask him what has happened, he is preoccupied and hardly answers. He walks unceasingly up and down the apartment, I leave him to himself.

Half an hour later, I bring him an egg beaten up in tea, which he seems to like ; he tells me to carry away a whole series of perfume bottles he has taken from his dressing-room.

"All these scents," says he, "have done me the greatest harm."

During dinner, he says this meeting of the doctors has not given him much hope about his health in the future, besides which Paris is not good for him, and that we are going to start for Cannes. Then he talks of his physical strength, saying he hopes that will

suffice to set him up again, adding he wants perfect rest. . . . and above all to see no more that wicked lady, who is so harmful to him. . . .

And now my poor master opens his heart to me, he makes a species of short confession to me. . . . For the moment, I feel such pity for him, such sorrow, that I have not the courage to express the slightest reproach. During the last month certainly, I had often gone out of the way of an ordinary servant, by giving him advice whenever there was an opportunity, and according to circumstances; sometimes my hints might go a little too far; but he, who had understood them well, did not reply.

That evening, however, his heart was full, he allowed some words to escape (which were an avowal) in the course of an answer by which he acknowledged I was right in the discreet recommendations I had ventured on giving for so long a time. I tried to remind him that to prolong life, it was necessary to avoid all dangers, and watch over health, the greatest of all possessions. . . .

On the 20th my master wrote to his mother, on the 22nd he settled accounts with his publishers.

I am busy packing. M. de Maupassant gives me the different articles which are to travel slowly, one or two dictionaries of which he possesses two copies (he has already some at Cannes) a few rare works by classical authors, which he wishes to read again before returning them to his mother to whom they belong. . . .

We take with us a special bag containing manuscripts and a few letters. All is ready by the 28th,

we go downstairs towards seven on the 29th, the carriage awaits us at the door. The concierge, a good and simple woman, sincerely saddened by our departure, sheds tears. . . .

My master gave her her Christmas box this morning, telling her he would be away on New Year's Day. . . .

November the 2nd. Chalet de l'Isère.—My master from his bedroom window beholds the open sea, the Cap d'Estérel jutting out into the blue water, and also the lighthouse. He is delighted with this view and his apartment, the very resting-place he wished for. He is alone in his little house, there is no piano either above or underneath, no near neighbours, a most extensive view, and his small garden in the centre of which he makes them plant a bed of carnations. This tiny garden looks well from the first story, it looks larger as it is next the one belonging to Madame Littré, widow of the celebrated professor. The autumn is splendid ; my master sails about on the sea, he loves his yacht more than ever. Though the climate is warmer, he tells me that at night the temperature of his room changes rapidly and gets very low by the morning. That is because there is only a loft above his room. That very day, I go off to a wood-yard, following the course of the river that comes from Cannet. Next day I made them lay a bed of sawdust about a foot and a half deep, on the ceiling. With a small fire, this precaution caused the temperature to remain regular.

Some friends from Paris are here, but only for a few days, they intend hiring or buying a villa for the

winter. My master takes them about for a sail or a drive, he does all he can to be of use to them, for they are old people. As to him, he is busy with his *Angelus*, working obstinately but slowly at it.

We are at the end of November ; my master complains of pains everywhere. It is strange ! For he looks well, his countenance is placid ; he is even somewhat stouter. Often he takes a bath at home, and every day his douche at the Baths. His appetite is good and regular, two or three times he has told me I have put too much salt ; but nevertheless he does not push the dish away. Now he rarely sees his usual doctor at Cannes, Doctor Gimbert ; as his friend Doctor Georges Daremberg is already here for the season, it is to him he goes and confides his ailings. Altogether, excepting the nights, his condition seems to me good. My poor master can never get any regular sleep before three in the morning. If he gets to sleep before, I am always sure he will call me at two.

December 6th.—This afternoon he takes a sail with Doctor Daremberg, who came to-day to lunch. They laughed, talking over their young days. I noticed the Doctor tried to recall suddenly certain details to M. de Maupassant, to see if he would answer without hesitation and in a direct manner. And my master never failed in his replies.

December 15th.—Since the beginning of the month, we go at least twice a week to Nice to lunch at Madame de Maupassant's. My master insists on my accompanying him, so as to prepare the meal.

"It is not that my mother's cook does not know

her trade, but I am accustomed to your cooking, and you understand what suits me."

December 16th.—In the evening, he walks about his tiny garden, and always keeps to his carnation-bed. Sometimes he leans closer to admire them in detail, many are already out, and there are thousands of buds. . . . I am in a corner with Bernard, cleaning the tricycle. My master says I need not do so, it is too dangerous a steed for this hilly country. . . .

On Christmas Day, I go sailing with my master, but the wind has dropped ; so it is a holiday for the seamen. When I come home, he has already returned, and asks if it is not too late for me to prepare his bath, I make haste, the bath is soon ready and he dines with appetite afterwards.

In the evening, Bernard accompanies Raymond who is to sleep at the Chalet. My master hears them and comes into the kitchen to say good-night to them. M. de Maupassant then tells us the first tale he intends to write will be the *Le Moine de Fécamp*, and he sketches his subject in a few words. In a loft, at Fécamp, he had seen a monk, who had lived in that retreat for years.

"I heard many curious details about him," added he, "from the woman who brought his provisions. I saw that Monk on two occasions, I am sure he does not suspect how I am going to touch him up. I intend to show him under new colours, and when my tale is told about this celebrated fellow, we shall hear nothing more of the Estérel hermit."

We all laughed with him about these strange beings

who leave the customary haunts of men, to live in a desert like the hermits of Egypt.

"Do you recollect," said M. de Maupassant to me, "the nocturnal ceremonies of our Divonne neighbours? they also furnished me with facts which will not be lost."

On the 26th in the afternoon, my master told me he was about to take a walk on the road to Grasse. He was back in ten minutes; I was dressing. He called me loudly, insisting on seeing me at once, so as to tell me what he had seen on the way to the cemetery. A shadow, a phantom! Certainly, he had been the victim of some sort of hallucination. I gathered he had felt frightened, but he would not say so.

When lunching on the 27th, he coughed slightly; and told me with the utmost gravity that assuredly a fragment of the sole he was eating had passed into his lungs, and that he might die of it! My scanty knowledge does not allow me to take this seriously. I simply advise him to drink some very hot tea. The result was satisfactory, an hour later he took the path leading to the harbour, and made a pleasant excursion on board the *Bel-Ami*. I little thought it would be the last one! ¹ He came in at about five, in good spirits, but feeling tired. He was better after being well rubbed down; rested before dinner, and took his meal as usual.

¹ In August 1893, after M. de Maupassant's death, the *Bel-Ami* was bought by M. Frederic de Neuville, who resold it in July 1895 to the Count of Barthélemy. About 1900 I found it at St Nazaire, having then become a simple fishing-boat.

In the evening, Raymond told me my master had had some trouble in getting in and out of the small boat, evidently he had no longer the command of his legs. Now and then he lifted them up too high, or put them down too rapidly. He had already complained to me about this difficulty in moving.

On the 28th we lunched at Nice as usual with Madame ; there was nothing to remark, except that from the house to the station my master never spoke, and that in the evening, in his room, he only said the few words necessary for my orders.

December 29th, five in the evening.—My master gets into his bath. At that very instant in comes his friend Dr Daremberg—I inform him that my master is in his bath.

"I don't care," answers he merrily, "I am just as pleased to see Maupassant in the water as in his drawing-room."

And he enters the bath-room.

"Now, old fellow," he exclaims, "don't take your hands out of the water, the heart's in the right place, and we don't want ceremony ! How are you ?"

Two peals of laughter resound in that unfurnished place.

When the Doctor took leave, I accompanied him to the garden-door.

"Your master," said he, "is of a very strong constitution, but he is attacked by a malady that may not spare the brain. Still he has just related to me his travels in Tunisia with extraordinary ease, mentioning the dates, the names of the people he saw,

without hunting for them, with no hesitation. All that came spontaneously, without any trouble ; he spoke like a man who has nothing to fear for a very long time. Therefore, patience, and courage, my good François."

On December the 30th there spread over the Estérel mountains and all the west of the sky a magnificent *aurora borealis*. My master made me take with him the path skirting Madame Littré's garden. There, we beheld the phenomenon in all its grandeur, nothing interfered with the view. M. de Maupassant seemed to enjoy life.

"I never saw," he exclaimed, "so fairy-like an aspect in the Heavens ! It is like none of the pink-orange auroras I have seen elsewhere. Look, 'tis blood-red !"

True, the sky was so red it was impossible to fix one's eyes on it even for a few minutes. My master tried to make me understand how these wonderful lights (connected with electricity and the magnetic fluid near the poles) arose.

On the last day of December he told me he had slept better than usual. When he had taken his egg and his tea, he told me his friend, M. Muterse, was coming to lunch, and that he would dress quickly, so as to go and take his shower-bath and return before his guest's arrival. At half past twelve, they sat down to table, but my master had a headache, and soon asked leave to go to his room, as conversation fatigued him.

Towards three, my master is better ; we go together

towards the Villa Bellevue. We stop where Rose stays (the woman who comes to char for us by day), then at the Villa Continentale. There we make inquiries on a subject which has to do with our rest, we ask how mosquitoes are attracted or got rid of. For instance, at the Villa Continentale, we used to be literally devoured by these noisome insects, and here in this little chalet we inhabit (which is quite close), we never see one.

And, yet exactly as at the villa, we have a ditch with pebbles at the bottom, we have even a wash-house and an uncovered well in the garden ; but we have never beheld one of these terrifying insects.

New Year's Day 1892.—My master is up at seven. I bring him his hot water for shaving, for we are to take the nine o'clock train to go and see his mother ; but he has some difficulty in shaving himself. He tells me there is a mist before his eyes, and that he does not feel well enough to go to his mother's. I help him as well as I can. He takes a couple of eggs and his tea, that does him good, he feels better. I throw his window open, the air and the sun flow into the room.

The postman comes, he reads a few letters of good wishes, " always the same," he says. Then the sailors come, my master goes downstairs to receive them. I hear them pronounce the same set sentence they repeat every year. But here, at least, the voices of these good fellows have an accent of inimitable sincerity, they are addressing a kind patron they love—without any interested motive. I also went to

shake hands with my comrades both by sea and land.

It is ten ; he asks me if I am ready to start.

" Because," sighs he, " if we don't go, my mother will think I am ill."

We take the train ; during the short journey M. de Maupassant looks out on the sea, it is beautifully blue under the purest of skies, with a good east wind. He observes this bright weather would be perfect for a sail. And absorbed by the view, he tells me to glance over the papers and tell him if I see anything likely to interest him.

At Madame de Maupassant's I cook and serve the lunch, apparently he eats with a good appetite. There were his mother, his sister-in-law, his niece and his aunt, Madame d'Harnois, whom he is very fond of. Many a time, when his heart has been too full, he has sought this lady out, so as to confide in her. She was naturally gifted in a way that enabled her to pity and console him.

The carriage came to fetch us at four ; on our way to the station we bought a large box of white grapes so as to continue the usual grape cure. At the chalet, M. de Maupassant changes his clothes, puts a silk shirt on to be more comfortable, and dines as usual eating the wing of a chicken, endive with cream, and a vanilla soufflé, with a glass and a half of mineral water.

Till ten, he walks from the drawing-room to the end of the dining-room, occasionally coming to the kitchen, the door of which has been left open. Sometimes he throws a word or two to Raymond and to me.

When I took him a cup of camomile tea in his bedroom, he followed me directly, complaining of internal pains.

"I feel them even in my loins," said he.

I cupped him, and at the end of an hour, the pains left him. At half past eleven, he went to bed. Seated on a low chair in the bedroom, I waited for him to go to sleep. After taking his cup of tisane he ate some grapes and closed his eyes; it was then half past twelve.

I went into my room leaving the door open. A minute later, there was a ring at the garden door, it was a telegram. I looked into my master's room to see if he slept, and if it was possible to give him the telegram the postman said come from some Eastern land. But he was sound asleep, his mouth slightly open; I went to bed.

It was about a quarter to two when I heard a noise. I rushed into the small room next the staircase; I found M. de Maupassant standing with his throat bleeding.

"See, François," said he immediately, "what I have done. I have cut my throat. This is a case of absolute madness (sic). . . ."

I called Raymond. We put him on the bed in the next room, and I hastily bandaged the wound. Dr de Valcourt, suddenly called in, kindly helped me on this mournful occasion. Notwithstanding all I felt I was able to hold the lamp, while the doctor rapidly sewed up the wound aided by Raymond, who did not flinch and made himself useful. The operation succeeded perfectly.

My poor master was quite calm but did not utter a single word before the doctor. When the latter had left he told me how he regretted having done "such a thing" and causing us so much worry. He gave his hand to Raymond and to me; he wanted to ask our forgiveness for what he had done; he fathomed all the depth of his misfortune; his large eyes were fixed upon us as if he were requesting some words of consolation, if possible, of hope.

In moments like these (so painful that it seems we could not undergo them a second time without losing our reason) whence comes the strength that enables us to struggle against evidence itself? I continued to try and comfort my poor wounded master with all the soothing expressions I could find. I repeated them twenty times, they did him some good, he clung desperately to the most insane of hopes. At last his head drooped, his eyelids closed, he slept. . . .

Raymond leaning on the foot of the bed, was totally exhausted, he had done all he could; he was pale as death. I advised him to take a little rum, which he did, and then terrible sobs burst from him, though his eyes remained quite dry. We both watched over our good master; I never stirred, for he had put a hand on one of my arms; I was so afraid of waking him that we did not even speak. We had turned the lamps down, and in the dark, we reflected on the irreparable misfortune. . . .

How many thoughts passed through my brain during the latter part of that night! Sometimes,

I wished all was over, and my life at an end, it was so difficult to live. . . . Then I tried to hope again, since my master was able to reason, to realise the senselessness of what he had done ; his mind was not dead ; so I might still hope. By dint of argument, I persuaded myself I should be able to cure him, and that his state would improve in time. I told myself it was impossible he should thus leave us, when, only the day before, he talked to us in such lucid terms about his work, his *Moine de Fécamp* and his *Angelus*. Anyhow, I resolved to do all that in me lay to fight against this evil, which, when one thought of M. de Maupassant's powerful constitution, assuredly might be cured.

When he awoke, at eight, I was convinced he would get better. Bernard came ; he was terrified at the sight of our patient, he had become most awfully pale ; I touched his hand to see if he was feverish, no, it was cool. I asked him if he wished to take his tea, it was the hour. He hardly replied ; I offered him an egg beat up in tea which he accepted. By twelve, he was still in a state of complete prostration, indifferent to everything ; his calmness frightened me. . . .

The telegram that came on that fatal night remained open on the table ; it was signed by the Christian name of the ill-omened lady. My master's relative who opened it and read it, did not understand it. But I had shuddered at the sight of that signature. Is one to believe in fatality ? In the secret action of hostile forces ? Why did the good wishes of the most terrible

enemy of my master's existence reach him just at the moment when his splendid mind was threatened? It is a mystery!

During all that day, and the next, my master remained as if exhausted.

He sat up at eight o'clock in the evening.

"François," said he with feverish excitement, "are you tired? We are off, war is declared."

I answered that we were only to start the next day.

"How," said he, astounded by my resistance, "you want to delay my departure, when it is urgent that we should immediately take action! It has always been understood between us that we should stand together to avenge our country! You know we must try for it, at any price, and we shall succeed!"

True, he had made me swear to follow him should there be war against Germany; we were to go together and defend the eastern frontier. During our numerous journeys, he always gave me his military certificate to take care of, for fear this should be lost in the enormous quantity of papers he possessed.

It was getting late, my poor master persisted and was irritated by my delay. The situation was becoming difficult, he could not admit that I should prevent our departure. Luckily, Rose, the charwoman, appeared. She had a most surprising influence over him, so much authority. She was a tall woman with marked features like those of a Neapolitan, with curly greyish hair. All she said impressed him, he followed her advice without disputing it.

Next day the male nurse, sent from Dr Blanche's



ORAN HARBOUR, WITH SANTA CRUZ FORT IN THE BACKGROUND



asylum, arrived, and I was able to go to Cannes. I called at our butcher's to apprise him of my approaching departure, and to give him the mournful news. . . . He was cutting up a sheep, took up the bill I was to pay, put it down and remained perfectly dumb-founded for several minutes. His wife asked what was the matter with him, trying to recall him to reality.

"Nothing, nothing," he answered, "but I cannot believe what has just been told me. That gentleman I saw going by several times a day, in the direction of the harbour, has. . . . But his brisk and steady walk was that of a man full of life, and health, it was a delight to see him. I have read some of his tales, and loved him dearly, he was a great writer. Ah! what a misfortune. . . ."

The good fellow's heart was too full, he put his handkerchief to his eyes, and could not keep his tears back.

"We have been married fifteen years," said his wife, "and this is the first time I have seen him weep."

I think it is the sixth of January. Rose and the keeper are with my master, who is calm. As to me, I am not quite conscious, I move like an automaton, but the moment I glance at the patient, reality re-appears. I am constantly fearing he may return to our discussion about going to the war . . . it is a strange hallucination.

Now we are in a sleeping car, attached to the Paris Rapide; we are going to Dr Blanche's house at Passy, where my master is to stay, and perhaps be cured. He is lying there on the central couch, showing no

agitation, and quiet as a lamb. The train rushes along we are going through the Estérel mountains. I am standing, and put my hand on the door, it flies open. I just escape being thrown out into space! I cannot even tell how it was that I did not fall out! When I had closed the door, and was regaining my self-possession, the keeper spoke to me:—

“You have had an escape!” said he, “it was written you were not to die, no doubt because your master, to get well again, requires your care.”

I was struck by these words, and felt my courage revive.

Passy, January the 7th.—During the whole of that first day my master rests; he seems very tired and yet he has slept during the greater part of the journey. . . .

Three days after our arrival at this private asylum, Dr Blanche came at eleven o'clock in the morning. M. de Maupassant was beginning his breakfast. After saying good-morning and shaking hands with him, the celebrated doctor sat down, and remained present during the meal. He spoke on different subjects, putting unexpected questions. My master answered them all, quite to the purpose. I must add that he already knew Dr Blanche, and held him in high esteem.

“Your master,” said the doctor when he left, “does all that you ask him, which is a good thing. He answered my questions quite correctly, all hope is not lost! . . . let us wait.”

This hopeful speech comforted me, and I blessed this excellent white-haired man, whose worthy countenance made me trust him at once.

So, till the 20th of April, helped by the male nurse, I took care of M. de Maupassant, with the firm hope of obtaining a good result. His physical health was good, his mental faculties also seemed in better condition. It was only on occasion that a few hallucinations haunted his quiet spirit. Sometimes he would tell us some most amusing jokes with the inimitable wit I was so well acquainted with, and he was happy to see his keeper and me laugh heartily.

One evening in April I was writing to his mother, when suddenly he reproached me with having taken his place at the *Figaro* and having slandered him in Heaven (*sic*). "I beg you to leave me," he added, "I refuse to see you any longer."

I was astounded, my heart sank, but following the advice of Baron the keeper, who knew better than I that kind of patient must not be opposed, I went away.

The next day my poor master welcomed me the same as usual, and asked me if we should soon return to his home in the rue Boccador.

In the day I recounted to Dr Blanche the distressing scene which had occurred, repeating exactly what my master had said to me. The specialist's face changed, his features hardened.

"So much the worse!" he exclaimed with a frown, "that's what I feared."

He ran quickly downstairs and it seemed to me he clung more tightly to the wooden banister he always leaned on. I remained puzzled. When I could collect my ideas I concluded that the doctor decidedly

despaired of his illustrious patient's recovering his mental balance.

"If he is not so well," thought I, "if there is no hope of curing him, why leave him here? We should be much better in the country, I and another man would suffice to watch over him, since though he has hallucinations, he never shows any opposition. True, he did tell me the other day to go away; but the next day he no longer thought about it."

June 17th, 1892.—Madame de Maupassant completely agrees with me. She would like a different sort of arrangement for her son's well-being. . . .

July 15th.—All has been tried with this intention on the part of my master's mother and of his aunt, Madame d'Harnois, who has always been full of solicitude about his welfare. But, to our great regret it is impossible, the unfortunate man must remain shut up, buried alive.

On the day I was told of this decision, my master received me with these words:

"François, when shall we return rue Boccador, where I have all I require for dressing? And my manuscripts are there, as well as my books. The food you know so well how to prepare for me would strengthen me, whereas here I shall never be cured!"

I was obliged to listen to this without being able to find a word in reply. Was it not heart-breaking? As usual, I promised that we should soon return to the rue Boccador. I must say the doctors always treated me with the same kindness, one of them one day

questioned me as to the length of time I had been in M. de Maupassant's service.

"Yes," said he after a short conversation, "I understand you, my poor fellow, but what would you have? . . ."

September.—Now my master no longer speaks of returning to his home. . . . One day he asks me for the ivory carving he had so mysteriously given away, and smiles, notwithstanding which he declares he does not know what has become of it. Then he turns to Baron, taking him to witness of the truth of what he said.¹ This keeper, who was both amiable and yielding, understanding his profession perfectly, had become a favourite with the patient.

"Certainly, François," M. de Maupassant's memory is good, he recollects that detail perfectly, and many other things as you may have observed."

October.—We go into the garden every time the weather allows of it. The days grow shorter and darker; there are already fogs on the shores of the Seine. It is not fine to-day, M. de Maupassant spends his time in the drawing-room and plays billiards.

I came home, and being alone in the evening, I took up a volume of my master's works. I pause as I am reading, I fancy he is near me. . . . His writings are so like himself, I think he is there and is about to pronounce my name; I see his gestures putting life into his tales, he is present to me with the hearty laugh he had when he spoke to me of his readers.

¹ See Chapter XI.

Yes, alas ! I live the old days over again, I hear distinctly my master giving me his usual order.

" François, this afternoon you will carry my article to the *Gil Blas*. I hope they will be pleased, since they love merry ones ! "

Then he would have a burst of hearty laughter, like a child pleased with having accomplished its task.

On Easter Monday (April 3rd, 1893).—I was in the garden with my master and the nurse. He has grown much thinner during that long winter, and his walk is less steady. We sit down on a bench under a chestnut, the rays of the sun glimmer through the young leaves.

Notwithstanding all, my master still enjoys the revival of Nature, he looks at the fresh green lawn stretching out before us ; it is such a rest for one's eyes. I make him admire the beauty of a young shrub already crowned with variegated leaves that are almost white.

" Yes," he answers, " that is a pretty tree, but it cannot be compared with my white Étretat poplars, particularly when the east wind blows."

When in this garden, enclosed by severe-looking walls, I think of the numerous walks we have taken together on the mountains, in the pure free air, I seem to see us both on the top of Mount Renard, when he would point out to me with his cane the Swiss mountains, showing me Chamonix, Zermatt and Monte Rosa.

I also recollect that it was on that spot he told me, with a certain embarrassment betraying a regret he did not confess, that his intended marriage had been broken

off partly on account of these travels in Switzerland. Ah! had he but married, how different his fate would have been! I know the lady who was to have been his wife, her intelligence is great. No doubt she would have steadied her husband, have prevented his wearing himself out. My poor master would not have become paralysed, destined to end his days in a lunatic asylum, but he would have become the most fertile writer of his time; and his works would have been so near perfection! One day I mentioned this impression of mine to Dr Blanche.

"Guy de Maupassant," answered he, "was too much of an artist to marry!"

For the moment I thought the doctor was perhaps right, but after reflecting a little, when I recollected how kind my master was, how easily influenced by the suggestions of the heart, I came to the conclusion that a woman appealing to the delicacy of his feelings, to his splendid mind, would have done what she chose with him . . .

Of what use was it to look backwards? No one escapes his destiny. That of M. de Maupassant was altered by a meeting which determined his fate when he was about to take the usual step.

As we returned from our walk, we passed before the aviaries, filled with all kinds of birds. Here, it is Baron who converses with master about all these feathered creatures he is so much interested in. He is well-versed in these matters of the poultry-yard; M. de Maupassant recognises the fact, and listens with pleasure to his explanations.

When I left my master in the evening he gave me his hand, and seemed even sadder than usual. As had happened before, I left the place with a heavy heart ; never did I feel more deeply the horrors of that tomb where my dear master was buried alive. . . .

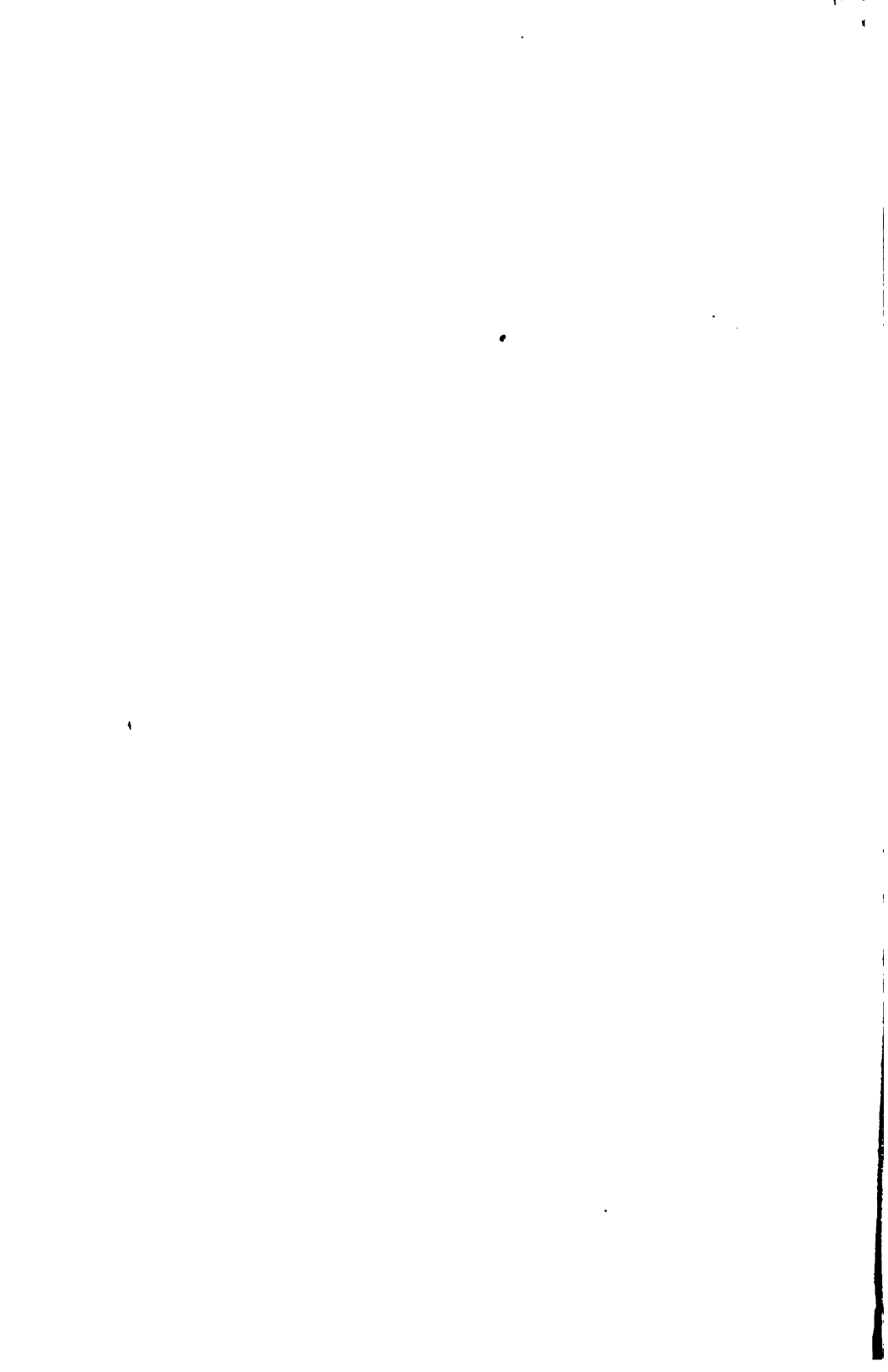
It is the end.

On July 3rd, 1893, M. de Maupassant passed away in that gloomy retreat, alas ! far from me. . . .

My task is ended. I have told the little I know about M. de Maupassant. May this sincere and humble book, the faithful echo of a long intimacy with my departed master, give a few useful details to those who may endeavour to place in full light the works and the personality of that wonderful writer.

THE END

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